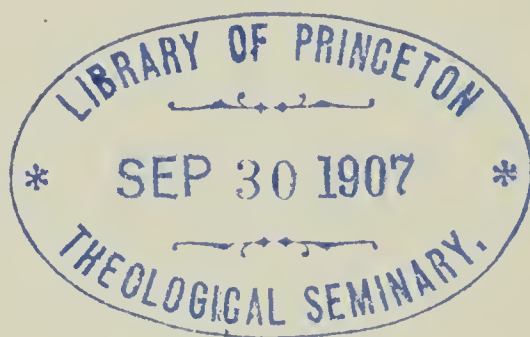


HANDBOOKS · FOR · THE · CLERGY



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Lay work and the office of  
reader



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Handbooks for the Clergy

EDITED BY

ARTHUR W. ROBINSON, B.D.

VICAR OF ALLHALLOWS BARKING  
BY THE TOWER

LAY WORK

AND THE

OFFICE OF READER



LAY WORK  
AND THE  
OFFICE OF READER

BY

HUYSHE YEATMAN-BIGGS, D.D., F.S.A.

BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

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## PREFACE

I HESITATE to seem to lay down the law on the many points of organisation and definition which concern the growing profession of Readers. The Convocations have spoken, though not exhaustively, and Diocesan Bishops have issued regulations for their dioceses. An individual writer then can only presume to offer a sketch as a contribution to the general stock of experience, in the hopes that the discussion of the subject may serve to bring the affairs of Readership into some clear, authoritative shape as soon as possible. Otherwise the Church may lose an opportunity, and find that, for lack of definite guidance, and by reason of the very vigour of the movement, and the earnestness of the men, principles have been adopted in various directions which are contradictory to one another, and by use have become too strong to be corrected without friction. If the growth were allowed to continue too long thus untrained and unpruned,



the Church might find herself powerless to order, and therefore unable to use systematically, a force which ought to be of the highest value to her in the days of dearth of clergy, and amidst the difficulties which arise from our increase of population.

The origin of the present sketch was an address I made to the Diocesan Conference assembled in the Chapter-house of Southwark in 1901, advocating a fuller recognition of the Order of Readers. The Conference, by resolution, desired me to produce and print something fuller on the subject than the limit of an address permitted. I accordingly collected some material, but the pressure of South London work made it impossible for me to put it into shape. The invitation, however, of the Editor of the "Handbooks for the Clergy," and the occurrence of a holiday, have brought my thoughts, such as they are, to the birth.

H. S.

SAN MARTINO DA CASTROZZA,  
*July 1903.*

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## CHAPTER I

### POSITION OF THE LAITY

AT the front of any consideration of "Lay work" must stand the recognition of the position of the Laity in the Church, a matter which has from time to time been forgotten by the Church, to her great loss. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," said St. Paul, addressing not the Clergy alone but the whole body. And, without for a moment undervaluing the position of the Clergy, which would be as serious a mistake, historically speaking, as the one which we here deplore, it would seem that our great need to-day is to impress upon all men the true rights and place which the Laity have in the Church of God.

This the Joint Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury (1902) did, when, having recited its belief that there is a primitive distinction between Clergy and Laity, which will continue to the end, it added: "By distinction we do not

understand separation; we have no reason to regard the distinction as anything more than a provision for the purpose of developing the fulness of corporate life in the Church, which is Christ's Body, and for maintaining in it the fulness of the Truth."

These rights and that place extend far beyond the subject of this volume; they touch government as well as work. But all privilege, of whatever sort, must, if it is to be wholesome for any community, carry with it a sense of duty. It is because the Laity are a true part of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, that they not only may, but are in duty bound to, perform serious and definite work in promoting the Kingdom of God. It can hardly be said that the layman, who fails to seek his opportunity of claiming his right as a worker, understands the nature of his privilege as baptized into the Body of Christ. A beautiful passage in Bishop Moberly's Bampton Lectures bears on this point: "There can be no doubt that in the language of Holy Scripture, it is the Church, entire and complete, not any class, or rank, or caste of persons within it, which is spoken of as the Spirit-bearing Body of Christ, the successor of Christ, the holder of

power and privilege in Christ, nay, even as Christ Himself upon earth. 'As the body of a man is one and hath many members, and all members of that one body, though they be many,' and have various offices of duty and degrees of strength and honour, 'are one body, so also is Christ.' No person can, I suppose, have any doubt, that this great saying applies to the Church at large, not to the apostles or clergy within the Church only, but to the entire Church, including all its members whether clerical or lay."

And further, "The Spirit-bearing Church, in all its members, is the ultimate possessor of every sort of Divine power or privilege in and under Christ the Head, so that the persons who exercise spiritual office and authority within it are, in strictness of speech, real representatives of the Body of which they are thus made organs."

These words of Bishop Moberly are made the more striking because he uses them in conjunction with a full appreciation of the grace of ordination. "It will be my object to show that, compatibly with the existence by successive Ordination of persons expressly empowered to administer the life-giving and life-supporting



rites of the Church, the real and ultimate possessor of all the power and privilege, under Christ, is the Church itself; the Church entire; not apostles, not bishops, not clergy alone; but the entire Body of Christ, comprising apostles, bishops, clergy and lay-people,—all in their respective places contributing, and bound to contribute, to the great work of diffusing more widely, and deepening where it is diffused, the living energy of the Holy Spirit, so far as it is given to human agency to aid in diffusing and deepening it.”

Bishop Barry, in his “Position of the Laity in the Church,” says: “It is marked as the special glory of the Pentecostal inspiration, which was the birth of the Church of Christ, that in fulfilment of ancient prophecy it was an outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, upon young and old, upon freedman and slave, and a writing of the laws of God upon all hearts so that all should know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. If we ask what was the one condition of entrance upon that high state of spiritual privilege, the answer is plain: ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift

of the Holy Ghost.' Nothing is clearer than this, that the promises, the blessings, the inspiration, the mission of the Kingdom of Christ are represented as given to the whole body of the Church, and to all its members."

A great revival of teaching concerning God the Holy Ghost has been one of the marked blessings of the English Church in the last half-century. It has led, among other things, to increased care in the administration of Confirmation; and this in its turn, by quickening the general spiritual life, has resulted in a more lively sense of the oneness of the Laity with the Clergy in the Divine Body. It has shown itself also in revival of counsel with the Laity. It is not beyond the memory of some of us, that the gathering together of Clergy and Laity in conference was once deprecated even by some bishops. To-day few churchmen would be found willing to question the vigour which has come from those sober, brotherly, outspoken counsels in which the Laity have taken their share as members of the Church, yet there was a time, not long ago, when such gatherings were feared. Indeed even after our great conferences of Clergy and Laity were very generally accepted,

it was an axiom among some of those who would have directed the movement, that nothing of a controversial nature should be allowed. I recollect a timorous clergyman twenty-five years ago objecting to the introduction into the agenda paper of a diocesan conference of what he called burning subjects. The bishop, who trusted his laymen and believed in the overruling power of the Holy Spirit in council, insisted that the safety of the Church depended upon her voice being heard specially on these most anxious questions, so long as men on each side spoke out truly and charitably. The result was, as he himself afterwards described the debate, that men arrived on the scene harshly contrasted like black and white, only to find that their enemy's black was not so very black nor their own white so very white.

The English Church, then, has already learnt that the Church is not a collection of bishops, priests, and deacons, set up by the authority of the State with duties, which, as in some other State departments, are remote from the usual duties of men. She has awoke to a conscious knowledge of her divine creation as a living whole, infused by the Holy Ghost. Herein the Clergy

exist with double credentials, from God to man and from man to God, intimately representative either to other; and the Laity exist with their own credentials too. So that while no student of history will ever forget the position of the ordained ministry, standing with authority in the Name of God, he will yet rightly realise that the layman has his proper place as well, in counsel, worship, correction, and edification, and that he, too, is a member of a great brotherhood in Jesus Christ, in which the Laity cannot do without the Clergy, but in which it is equally true that the position of the Clergy cannot be explained without reference to the heritage of the Laity.

Not till the close inter-relation of the whole Body of the Church is understood, can we grasp how the Clergy are both priests and ministers, servants of God and servants of the people; or define with any safety the true rights of the Laity and the true vocation of the Clergy.

These, then, are the grounds on which the call is made for Lay work, and on these, I believe, the Laity are to-day widely prepared, not only to answer to the call, but even to demand that it shall be more fully made. It is not enough to preach the high usefulness of Lay work in our constantly



widening sphere of duty as a Church. What must be proclaimed is the *privilege* which membership in the Divine Body implies, and how necessary it is to wholesome life, that there shall be an active, intelligent, self-denying participation in the operations of the Kingdom of God by laymen, the whole Body fulfilling its duty as the Spirit-bearing people.

In the effort to carry out these principles in the matter-of-fact affairs of ordinary religious organisation, which are precisely the opportunities that come to work-a-day men, one step forward, then, of an important character will be made, when the ordinary layman sees that he appears on the scene, not as an invited guest but as a son of the house. The Church work which he takes up will no longer be on terms of inequality. The last rag of condescension in the priest who asks for the layman's help will disappear, as will also the layman's unreasonable distrust of his power or call. The priest will ask for Lay work as a simple duty belonging to all the baptized. The layman will accept that call, not as a civil invitation, nor even as the cry of a distressed and overburdened priest, but as a right of his own which he eagerly



claims. He will step forward to act to the best of his powers, because it is the privilege of his class, and, further, because he believes that ability will be given to him to perform what he is called on to do in the Name of God.

But when once the privilege is understood, there will arise the need of caution and a due recollection of relation and proportion. In operation there must be order and discipline. Never yet did any clergyman gain lasting influence by forgetting his Holy Orders and playing the layman. He may catch some easy applause, but he will not strengthen himself finally in his sacred calling. Just so with the layman who takes up definite work. He will be the more forcible if he still remains a manly layman, free from pose, free from mannerisms of voice or gesture, free, too, from anything which may in the least degree savour of intrusion into the obvious duties of the ordained. It is possible that some of our robust younger men may ere now have flinched from entering upon recognised Lay work, because of some hybrid example of a worker who has come under their notice, appearing to be neither parson nor layman. Such examples are to be regretted, but they will not

deter men who look beyond the individual into the principle which lies behind. They will be truly proud of being called by their baptism to take an active part in the cause of Christ, and they will find force in the fact that they are simple laymen still.

The priest and the layman in a given parish are partners in work, each having his own particular duty to perform, and discipline will be needed for each according to his order. Undoubtedly in parish affairs there must be a predominant partner, who will be the incumbent or in some departments his assistant curate. But the more fully they co-operate as partners, subject to the proper conduct and unity of the business to be done, the more effective, and, in my judgment, the truer to principle, that parish work will be.

In advocating a better general adjustment of priestly things to the priest, and lay things to the layman, two *caveats* may be permitted. The first is that, notwithstanding the readjustment, our Clergy should beware of becoming so professional as to lose sympathy and touch with those secular things which, never more than to-

day, need the influence of Christian thought and method.

True, the much busy-ness of the Clergy is not only an evil, inasmuch as it tends to deprive the Laity of their privilege in being partners in parish work, but it is a blunder for the priest himself. The overworn head of a parish with many organisations, has ere now been brought to such anxiety as to the maintenance of his various machines, that the machines themselves have been preserved, at the expense of the thing they were designed to produce. The vicar may possibly become so much a purveyor of social, philanthropic and educational attractions that he begins to lose, by non-exercise, those high powers which were the real gift of his ordination, and were to have formed the difference between himself after "the laying on of hands" and the same self who, as an enthusiastic young layman, was engaged in Lay work. Yet he must not for a moment forget that he is a citizen too. The clergyman who, in his eagerness to serve humanity, forgets his clerical duty in order to be a good citizen, misses the higher level to which he was called. The clergyman who becomes so professional as to forget such civic and social duties

as his ordination vows may permit, loses, and fatally loses, a chance of representing Him Who was Perfect Man as well as Perfect God.

But there is a *caveat*, too, which may be useful to the layman who aspires to effective work in the Church. I have a letter of Sydney Smith's to a friend, who had asked his advice as to whether he should be ordained: "No, my friend," he replied, "there are some excellent natures which are stuffs which will not take that dye. When all was done, you would still be the irreverend Mr. —." I should be sorry to apply the story exactly to any clerical or lay friend, but it points the moral. The more completely the system of Lay work is recognised and honoured, the more clear it will be, that by some men a better work is to be done outside Holy Orders than within. It might have been well for some men now ordained if, at the outset, they had lived in days when this was appreciated. But although it would be an excellent thing for every clergyman to have served a period of apprenticeship as a Reader, before presenting himself for indelible orders, yet Lay work should not be viewed as a stepping-stone to something else. It should be self-sufficient in a good sense. The



diaconate has lost its character and usefulness by being treated merely as a year's probation for the priesthood. We must not make the same mistake with organised Lay work. Indeed it would lower its dignity to suggest for a moment that it is other than a great vocation in itself.



## CHAPTER II

### LAY HELP AND THE SCARCITY OF CLERGY

EVERY one interested in the pastoral side of the Church's ministration, has deplored and discussed the dearth of assistant Clergy. We have asked others and ourselves what the cause may be. Honest uncertainty about doctrine; the reluctance of young men to be committed for life, to what they feel to be, for them, an untried profession; the inadequacy of income for family life; the disproportion of benefices to curacies; the insecure position of the curate; the demand which the parish priest's life nowadays makes upon a man's whole thought, strength, and resource; "our unhappy divisions;" are some of the reasonable answers which are given to a question, which is becoming one of vital importance, not only to town but to country parishes. It is vital especially to those town parishes where a great chain of organisations has, for some years, brought many persons within the influence

of religion, who would not otherwise have had that help in their spiritual combat. Now those forces of good are being weakened by lack of men to keep them in healthy action. But it is vital also in country parishes, where patrons are finding it hard to fill their smaller livings worthily; and in those wide districts, say, of many hamlets with one ancient parish church, which hitherto have been active spheres for a couple of keen, country-loving, university men, but are now left with half the ministrations of former days.

It would be interesting to discuss causes and remedies for the present condition, on much wider lines than are set by a volume which deals with a branch of Lay work. But I think that no one can go to the bottom of the question without asking whether one remedy at least may not be found in a fuller use of Readers. On the other hand, certainly, no one can fully consider the future of Lay work without being brought to look at its relation to the question of the dearth of Clergy.

Conservatism of method in the parochial pastorate has its merits. But the fact is, we are trying to meet the needs of the twentieth century and our enormous population, with a machinery,

so far as the priesthood is concerned, which was used in the quiet days of Queen Anne. If the public could be brought to see that much which the Clergy do, need not be done by them, and that much that the Clergy still do not do, should be done by them, a rearrangement of duties might be made, by which the trained and devoted layman should be assigned a more official position. Then we might recover from our panic about our lack of Clergy, and come to the belief that there is no very terrifying dearth after all.

Ere now some great difficulty in the Church, which seemed to threaten her with decay, has presently been discovered to be God's way of driving men to see and use the forces which all along were latent in the Body, with the result that she has emerged from the difficulty the stronger because of the trial. May it not be the case that our dearth of Clergy in relation to population is God's method of forcing us to use in a more recognised form, and with fuller confidence, those forces of Lay ministration which have all along been part of the Church's heritage?

It would be indeed ungrateful, in any one who

knew clerical life fifty years ago, to wish to do anything except praise and love it. We turn away from it, if we turn away at all, with a sigh that the mighty rush forward of England in all directions, has forced us to relinquish here, as elsewhere, what was in its time and season the best product we could give. Who is there who would not reproduce, if he could, the leisurely parson, who had time to know all his people and to be their spiritual father and their temporal friend? He was the authority in his parish, trusted of all men, for most things, from the Thirty-Nine Articles down to the care of the churchyard and the kemptness of its walks.

“How old are you, Betty?” “Well, I don’t well mind; but the Passon do know.”

Yes, we part sadly with the clergyman of the old type, who often knew his flock more truly than they knew themselves, and could straighten and better their ways, in things temporal and eternal. There he stood, not only as a guide to heavenly hopes, but as a link, and often the only link, between his people and the richer, bigger world. He and his goodwife looked for opportunities to place out the boys and girls, and, as they did so, guarded their morals and



warned them from their wider knowledge of life. Sometimes the parson would be their legal adviser, too, in the serious troubles, as they judged them, which beset their slender store: and often he was their doctor. But even so he had not fulfilled all his functions. From his study, better supplied with books than furniture, there sometimes went out the only streams of literature and culture, which the neighbourhood could use. The historian of village life, as it was in days gone by, will some day tell us how much England owes in standard of morals and education, to the resident clergyman of university training, who rejoiced in his country home and country people; his church his most cherished edifice, and his school his pride; who, as he went his daily round of visits, sometimes cheery, sometimes grave, often consultative and consolatory, filled with happy incidents a simple life.

The picture is inviting. But when we are face to face with a population, which in our towns grows on by leaps and bounds, while our church resources, both of men and money, remain stationary or diminish, we are forced to bid farewell to the old dream. Rudely awakened, we ask ourselves how much of that old clerical life was



really a necessary part of the priestly office after all. Were the Clergy not all along doing what it was the duty of other members of Christ's Body to do; the doing of which by the wider circle would, even then, have been the wholesomer condition of Church life?

Suppose, then, the withdrawal of the Clergy within the priestly sphere (of action, not of sympathy), were accompanied by the appearance on the scene at the same time of a body of keen laymen, sufficient to prevent the decay of any of the good works hitherto left to the Clergy: is it not at all events conceivable, that our present outcry about a dearth of Clergy might change its tone, and that we might discover other ways by which the Church's operations might be made even more effective than before? Might it not be more far-seeing to raise the quality of our ordinands than to increase their number?

Whatever the population, wherever the place, whether it be town or country, whether the people be gentle or simple, England needs the best of her sons for her priesthood; best in holiness, in education, in knowledge of men, and in manners.

Let us never rule out the ardent youth who

by God's grace has received special gifts, although he hails even from the humblest ranks. But, speaking generally, experience is telling us constantly, that the same kind of man who would be chosen as the best for secular places of responsibility, where direct dealing with his fellows is essential, is the kind of man we want to-day for our priesthood; at all events in those paths which, although the world does not estimate them at their value, are the ideal ones of clerical life, those which give opportunity of dealing with Christ's souls, man to man, in the simple pastorate.

And it is practical to add this remark: that it would be a great gain, if the rearrangement of work between Clergy and Laity tended to limit the number of assistant Clergy, so as to readjust the proportion between curates and incumbents, thus making promotion of younger men to places of responsibility more likely. The hopelessness of any future which can give fair play to a man's powers, in the present disproportion of livings to curacies, has a dwarfing effect on a young man's zeal, and stops some of the best men, who may have few connections, from taking Orders. We could not contemplate the better-

ing of the Clergy's professional position, if it meant harm to the message which we must at any cost deliver. But when we are convinced that we have allowed ourselves to drift too far along the lines of quieter days, and that the putting of organised Lay workers into some of the places of duty hitherto forced upon the Clergy, would really enable the good tidings to be carried more surely than before; then we are justified in adding this argument to a plea for readjustment, that we also see in it an opening for that bettering of the Clergy's position which is certainly their due.

Here our consideration of the effect on the dearth of Clergy of a revived and reorganised system of Lay work must end. But it would be no little glory in that revival, if it should so free clerical life from affairs which are not essential to it, as to make it possible for the Church to strain less nervously after an increase in the priesthood; with the result that the priesthood was bettered both in position and in quality.

## CHAPTER III

### THE READER

WHILE not claiming for the office of Reader, any exclusive right to the first place in Lay work, it seems useful to look at it as completely as we can, because at the present moment it bids fair to be the most methodical of our efforts to put Lay work into its proper place, and because it has received considerable attention from both Houses of Convocation in both Provinces.

Among the earliest of the Minor Orders appeared the Reader, and although the name and office hardly fit the present use, in days when all men can read, and the importance of providing authorised, correct Readers of the Scriptures and other written sources of instruction is no longer urgent; yet the fact remains that it is the name which has been adopted by Convocation. It is possible that Deacon or Sub-deacon might more truly represent what, under authority, our Readers are beginning in all directions to be.



But without prejudice to the extension of the diaconate, it is, I think, convenient for us at the present time to let the name alone and push on with the organisation of the work itself; more especially because the "Reader" was, as we shall see, the one Minor Order distinctly recognised in England after the Reformation, and used in those days somewhat as we use it now.

The Reader or Lector, although apparently not a primitive office, is nevertheless an extremely ancient one. Tertullian implies that there was a recognised order of Readers in his day (A.D. 192), and Cyprian's evidence (A.D. 250) is more positive still. The office, moreover, appears to have been held in considerable honour, so Bingham tells us, and he relates that Julian himself was a Lector in the Church of Nicomedia.

But it is important for us who are feeling after ancient precedent, in our desire to revive a vigorous and useful Order fitted to our modern needs, to take note that the Lector, however honourable, did not receive imposition of hands. There is evidence that in the Eastern Church he might have done so, but not in the Western Church. What the Council of Carthage enjoins is that the bishop, assuring the Church that the



candidate has been ascertained to be orthodox in faith, blameless in life, and zealous, shall then put a Bible into the Lector's hands, saying, "Take this, and be a Reader of God's Word. If thou fillest the office faithfully and usefully, thou shalt take part with those who have ministered the Word of God."

Thus ordered and recognised, the Readers continued with various degrees of honour and success until the time of the Reformation.

At that time the Church of England ceased to feel the necessity of the Minor Orders, preferring to emphasise the dignity of the three great Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. But it is not generally appreciated, and the fact has caused some surprise that the one Minor Order which was recognised anew, and is apparently still recognisable, was "the Lector."

The main cause of this was a sad one. It was no other than the low state, both in number and attainment, to which the Clergy had fallen in those days of trouble and uncertainty. The violent arguments which surrounded the Reformation undoubtedly left ordinary men in great perplexity, the more dangerously so because those who were now called upon to choose between new

and rival teachings, had grown up accustomed to absolute rulings on matters of faith. It is not unnatural that such an age should also have been one in which men unreasoningly broke away from all religion. This had its effect upon the number of candidates for Holy Orders. Young men doubted as to what they would be pledging themselves if they entered the priesthood. On the one hand the pendulum might have swung back, and they might have found themselves in an awkward position with the adherents of the older system. On the other, the swing might have carried them whither they would not go, in the direction of the new religion. We cannot be surprised that men did not present themselves. The shock, too, of the change from what, for good or for ill, had been the accepted inviolable lines seems to have dried up enthusiasm. Men would not or could not for a while seek the priesthood quite in the old simple way of its being the one channel in which to dedicate a life. What, then, was to be done until confidence was restored? The bishops were put about.

A letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Bishop of London in August 1560, quoted by Strype, states that, in consequence of the

great want of Clergy, the bishops had admitted to the priesthood some whom further experience had shown to be "offensive unto the people, yea, and to the wise of this realm." This plainly would not do for a reformed Church, which had to win its way; and an effort seems to have been made to carry on the services, which were in danger of lapsing owing to the dearth of Clergy, by a carefully regulated Order of Readers, as being preferable to lowering the quality of the Clergy. The Bishop of Hereford, replying to the Archbishop's inquiry made in October 1561 as to the condition of his Clergy, adds a note to the form which accompanies the letter that "there are divers and many chapels . . . which be either unused, or served by a Reader only." And in April of the same year, the two Archbishops, with the Bishops of London, Ely, and some others, drew up articles at Lambeth for the ordering of this useful body, in which the following occurs: "That Readers be once again by every Ordinary reviewed, and their abilities and manners examined, and by the discretion of their Ordinaries to remain in their office or to be removed, and their wages to be ordered; and that abstinence from mechanical

sciences be also enjoined, by the discretion of the Ordinaries, as well to Ministers as to Readers."

But what is of great interest to those who desire to see what the English Readers of the Reformation period were allowed to do, is the list of duties put out for them in the Injunctions of 1561. Their public duty was:—

To read whatever was appointed by authority,  
and conduct services in church,

To bury the dead,

To church women,

To keep registers.

They were forbidden

To preach or interpret,

To minister the Sacraments.

In private life, the Readers were enjoined:—

To dress soberly, especially in church.

To use their influence on behalf of peace, and  
not to give occasions of offence.

To read daily one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New, with a view to increasing their own knowledge.

The terms of their appointment were as follows:—

They were appointed by the bishop, to whom they were directly responsible, having to send to



him testimonials as to their behaviour within six months.

They were to be appointed to the poorer parishes destitute of incumbents; or to other parishes in times of special need such as sickness; or at other times as the bishop thought useful.

They were entitled to the income of the parish so far as the Ordinary thought necessary.

In the event of absence from duty, owing to sickness or other cause, they had no power of appointing a substitute. This was only to be done by the bishop himself, at the request of the parishioners.

In the event of the appointment of a new incumbent, they were to resign their post; but reasonable warning had to be given, the length of it to be according to the bishop's discretion.

The injunctions which the Reader was required to accept and sign are so instructive, as showing the attitude which was taken towards them in the sixteenth century, that I add them.

#### ARCHBISHOP PARKER'S RULES.

The injunctions from Cardwell's "*Documentary Annals*," vol. i. p. 269, run as follows:—



Archiepisc. Cant.	Anno Christi.	Reg. Angliae.
Matth. Parker 2.	1561.	Elizab. 3.

Injunctions to be confessed and subscribed by them that shall be admitted Readers.

*In primis.* I shall not preache or interprete, but only read that which is appointed by public authoritie.

I shall read the service appointed playnlie, distinctlie, and audiblie, that all the people may heare and understand.

I shall not minister the sacraments nor other public rits of the Church, but burie the dead and purifie women after their childbirthe.

I shall keep the register book according to the injunctions.

I shall use sobrietie in apparel, and especially in the church at common prayers.

I shall move men to quiet and concord, and not give them cause of offence.

I shall bring in to my ordinary testimonie of my behaviour from the honest of the parishe, where I dwell, within one half-yere next following.

I shall give place upon convenient warning, so thought by the Ordinarie, if any learned minister shall be placed there, at the sute of the patron of the parishe.

I shall claim no more of the fructs sequestred of such, that I shall serve, but as it shall be thought mete to the wisdom of the Ordinarie.

I shall daylie at the least reade one chapter of the Old Testament, and one other of the Newe, with good advisement to the increase of my knowledge.

I shall not appoint in my room by reason of my absence, or sickness, any other man, but shall leave it to the sute of the parishe to the Ordinarie, for assignynge some other able man.

I shall not read, but in poorer parishes destitute of incumbents, excepte in time of sickness, or for other good considerations to be allowed by the Ordinarie.

*For Deacons.*

I shall not openlie intermeddle with any artificers' occupations, as covetously to seek a gen thereby, having, in ecclesiastical living, the sum of 20 nobles or about by yere.

In approval of these injunctions follow the signatures of—

Matthaeus Cant.

Edmund London.

Robertus Winton.

Richardus Elien.

Jo. Sarum.

Thomas Ebor.

Johannes Carleolen.

Guliel Chester.

Guliel. Exon.

Gilb. Bathon et Wellen.

Richardus Gloucester.

Such was the position of the Reader in England soon after the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> There are indications of two main considerations which moved the bishops in this matter. The first was the desire to bring into the working ranks of the Church men who were not likely to be ordained, but who, in their opinion, could be doing useful service in supplementing the work of the clergy. The other was a clear perception that such an Order must be used with caution. The injunctions, the declara-

<sup>1</sup> In the registers of the parish church of Croston, in Lancashire, some pages are *signed* by John Ryding, Lector. This occurs off and on from 1628 down to the troublous days preceding the rebellion, and the same man appears in his death register to have combined with his office that of schoolmaster. A light is thrown on the social standing of this reader, and very likely on that of other colleagues, by an entry of his own of the baptism of "Robt. nepos meus, son of Richard Ryding," and when the boy was buried he appears as the son of Richard Ryding, husbandman.

tions made by the men themselves, and the way in which the bishop kept the whole movement directly under his own eye, seem to show that care had to be taken at every step.

Not long afterwards the flowing tide of Reader work seems to have ebbed. In Archbishop Parker's visitation, 1569, there comes up what looks like a complaint from Fairfield "that their Church is served with a Reder, and that the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church is patron, and they have had but one sermon made this long time"; and from Shadoxhurst "that our benefice is vacant and hath been three-quarters of a year, but William Ashurst hath the sequestration and taketh up the fruits and findeth therewith a Reder." There may have been more than one reason for this. Possibly as the Church became less troubled, or at all events as the question of reconciliation with Rome became more remote, men grew more settled: and, learning in calmer circumstances what the Church in England really was, threw in their lot with the national system. Thus the ranks of the priesthood became more full, and there were fewer places for the Readers to occupy. Possibly the rise of Puritanism and unauthoritative preaching, made



the non-preaching Readers unpopular. There is little doubt that in many cases as the pre-Reformation generation passed away, which had been accustomed to look to the parish church for its only possible religion, those who came after grew used to there being no resident priest, and raised less cry of neglect on account of a disused Church, but sought consolation in the stirring, unauthorised preachings which were accessible elsewhere.

Possibly the Readers themselves failed to rise to the occasion, and were not satisfactory in point of ability or spiritual life. It is hard to say which was the dominant reason. Very likely several causes combined to discredit, in days of much change and of sharp criticism, a plan which had not had time to root or win popular affection. Then came the Great Rebellion, and with it the ejection of all the servants of the Church; and it is not surprising that the Order of Readers was forgotten in the catastrophe which overwhelmed the whole system; nor that they, being of insufficient standing, were not heeded in the reconstruction of 1660. Thus the movement, from which Archbishop Parker seems to have hoped much, was practically destroyed.



Yet the Readers, even so, did not entirely die out. For example, in 1671, eleven years after the Restoration, a Reader existed at Wandsworth. His name was Thomas Moseley, and his epitaph was in the south aisle of the church. He was paid for reading services in church, and also performed baptisms and burials.<sup>1</sup>

But, alas ! the violent reactions under James II., William, Anne, and George I. did much to destroy the great opportunity which the Church had, after the Rebellion, of creating far-reaching spiritual agencies for the nation. No religious system which, either voluntarily or perforce, becomes entangled in political partisanship can for long retain its power, as an agent of spiritual edification, among the people at large. The Church of England, at all events as far as many of her chief officers were concerned, became less and less alive to the great popular work which she was called to perform, and for which there was such need. For this was a time when the nation was beginning to settle down after its troubles ; and the increasing population in days of increasing prosperity was rapidly awaking to self-consciousness, under a constitutional monarchy.

<sup>1</sup> *Monumental Inscriptions*, by C. T. Davis, Reader and Librarian at Wandsworth.

Alas! for the wasted chances of those days! chances which to-day we have laboriously to attempt to recover. Alas! for the damped enthusiasm and the decay of Lay work. Alas! for the days when, in parishes, the priesthood often became placidly content with two services in the week, and the people saw no scandal if even these were neglected by the responsible incumbent who received the emolument; when, in dioceses, the bishops themselves were not unseldom absent; when Confirmations were neglected, or performed in such an unseemly manner that the sacred rite brought crowds together, filling the public-houses and making the towns, where the bishop met his flock, as noisy as on a fair day. These were times when, in the world, the dignitaries of the Church, scorning the pastorate, found social advancement; but they were the days of shadow as regards the real work which had to be done. What hope was there that in such an age any careful system of Readership could be promoted, fostered, and corrected? Indeed it is likely that an earnest Reader, actively engaged in visiting or giving addresses in scattered hamlets or in forgotten courts and alleys, would have been viewed as a dangerous enthusiast, who

outraged the decencies of the Established Church. The glory of such ministrations was often left to those whom the Church rejected; and, while the names of many churchmen must ever be had in remembrance for their zeal, we should never forget that much of the splendid reconstructive work which in those days might have been done by the Church, was offered to God by pious dissenters.

#### NOTE

The historical inquiry as to the continuance of Archbishop Parker's Readers into the eighteenth century gains interest from Canon Overton's evidence. But on comparing this with Bramhall, and with Dean Swift's "Fates of the Clergy," it appears that the readerships of that day were occupied by ordained clergy, although the stipend was as low as £20. Some of these posts may have been survivals from the days of the Readers whom we are contemplating; others were new offices, some of them endowed, which were filled by humble men, whose duty it was to read the prayers only, preparatory to the lecture or sermon which was preached by a more fashionable person.

But what is of importance to those who inquire into the reasons for the disappearance of the Lay Reader, is the evidence of the condition of clerical life in Parker's time being reversed in the early part of the eighteenth century. At this time the supply of clergy, instead of being less, was greater than the demand, and they were glad to occupy readerships, just as of old the Readers had occupied the benefices.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE READER IN RECENT TIMES

THE nineteenth century was not half over, before the great revival in Church life had made men conscious that the influence which the English Church should exercise in evangelising the nation could not be fully used, if the services of the Clergy were all that were available, and if the voice of the ordained minister was to be the only living voice heard by the people. The Nonconformists had been quicker than the Church. In village rooms, on village greens, in the streets and lanes of the city, the Methodist preacher in his homely and impassioned way was drawing souls to God, by methods which strangely contrasted with those of the recognised pulpit. All praise to those ardent men. But oh! that Archbishop Parker's Readers had either been worthy of their opportunity of old; or that the Church's leaders had known how to order or use them, so as to keep alive the continuity of a service which had



in it the expression of a valuable principle. If only the strong, saving, historic teaching of churchmanship could have been presented in those days by popular methods! If laymen duly instructed, commissioned, and disciplined could have gone in and out among the houses of other laymen telling their fellows in familiar language how their Church's sacraments were the Lord's own methods of carrying to men His saving grace! How much less we should hear to-day of our unhappy divisions. How much less bitterness there would be, when some movement is made by the Church, to regain what ought never to have been lost.

By the grace of God the revival came at last. Men began to see that the Church was the whole body of baptized people; and that a very large proportion of these people were wasting their opportunity for Christ, and doing nothing whatever to make known the Gospel of their new birth. It began to dawn on men's minds that the Church's vigour could not be felt till the Laity had claimed their privilege.

The way was already prepared, when the revival of Convocation (slight as is the representation of the whole Church in that ancient body) began

to give hope that the Church of England might again recover consciousness, and speak so as to be heard. It was not long, therefore, before the thoughts of those outside found voice inside the walls of Convocation, and the question of the place of the Laity in the agency of the Church was mooted.

Canterbury was more prompt than York, and the Lower House ahead of the Upper. In 1857 there was a general discussion on Lay co-operation; next year one on the extension of the diaconate, and then in 1859 the Lower House recommended what it called a "new agency," but really a very ancient one, in the restoration of the Order of Readers. The Upper House reported in 1864, and recommended a bishop's licence, and suggested that leave should be given to read lessons and say the Litany in church, putting forward the title "Lay Reader." But little came of it till 1866, when, in answer to the bishops, the Lower House declared that, recognising the importance of encouraging Lay Agency, they were of opinion that the wants of the Church would be most effectually met by the constitution of a distinct office, such as that of

Sub-deacon or Reader, as auxiliary to the sacred ministry of the Church.

The bishops then drew up regulations and a form of licence (see No. 161, Conv. Cant., 1884).

The next important step was a conference between Canterbury and York; but it passed off without formal agreement, the Northerners wishing for an "extended diaconate," the Canterbury House for an improved "Lay Readership."

But in May 1884 both Canterbury Houses agreed upon the following resolution:—

1. That no layman be admitted to the office of a Reader who has not been confirmed and is not a communicant of the Church of England; and that the bishop should satisfy himself of his personal fitness, knowledge of Scripture, and soundness in the faith. That the Reader should also be required to sign a declaration expressive of his acceptance of the doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and of obedience to the incumbent and the other properly constituted authorities, subject always to the control of the bishop of the diocese.

2. That in unconsecrated places the Reader

may expound the Holy Scriptures, may give addresses, may read such part of the Morning or Evening Prayer, and use such other services as shall have been approved by the bishop, and generally act under the incumbent in visiting the sick, and in other duties.

3. That in all cases the Reader shall hold the licence of the bishop of the diocese, and shall be admitted to his office by the delivery of a copy of the New Testament to him by the bishop.

The Convocation of York meanwhile, though not endorsing the action of the southern provinces, moved diligently forward. In 1883 a joint committee of both Houses, with Bishop Lightfoot in the chair, reported on the functions, qualifications, and mode of admission of Parochial Readers. After stating that the subject was of pressing importance, they recommended that the *functions of the Reader* shall be—

To teach in the schools.

To visit the sick and poor.

To read and explain the Scriptures in private households, and to exhort and pray therein.

To hold or take part in such services and in



such places as the law shall permit and the bishop shall approve.

And generally to render aid to the clergy in all ministrations which do not require the services of persons in Holy Orders. It being understood that nothing is done in any parish without the consent of the incumbent.

The *Qualifications of a Reader* were to be, that he be a member of the Church of England and a regular communicant,

And that there be a nomination from the incumbent, who shall certify to—

(a) Moral character.

(b) Soundness in the faith and competent knowledge of Scripture.

(c) Ability to perform the duties which shall be assigned to him.

Further, that he shall give the names of two laymen, being regular communicants, to whom reference could be made on his behalf.

The *Mode of Admission* was regulated thus:—

That previous to admission the applicant shall make a declaration in writing—

1. That he is a regular communicant of the Church of England.



2. That he promises to abide by the doctrine of the Church of England in his teaching.
3. That he will act under the direction of the incumbent.
4. That he will do all that in him lies to promote harmony and concord in the parish, and to advance the spiritual welfare of those among whom he is to labour.
5. And that he will be prepared to resign his office and return his commission upon being called upon to do so by the bishop.

That when the bishop is satisfied as to the character of the applicant he shall issue his commission with such directions as he may think fit.

And that either at the time of issuing his commission, or as soon after as conveniently may be, the candidate shall be publicly admitted by the bishop to the office with prayer and the delivery of the New Testament into his hands.

This important report was never regularly adopted by the whole House, but the great

influence due to its chairman, its origin and its practical wisdom, gave it a power, which is largely felt in the present position of Readers.

In 1899, however, there were indications of a growing idea as to the scope of a Reader's work. It was seen that the same commission or licence was not applicable to the various duties which Readers might perform. It was not reasonable or useful that a man doing a great work in some diocese or parish should be classed with one who, for instance, merely read the lessons in church once a week. In that year both Houses of York agreed that licences should be given to Readers, of a higher character than the usual one; and resolutions were adopted providing that a Reader should be allowed to officiate in any parish in the diocese, and requiring him to pass an examination which should satisfy the bishop.

The Convocation of Canterbury also in 1897-98 passed resolutions on the subject of Trained Lay Evangelists, and it was agreed that such men should be admitted to the office by the bishop of the diocese in which they were trained, and receive letters of admission which would be permanent; but that the holder would nevertheless

require a Reader's licence from any bishop into whose diocese he subsequently went, to enable him to exercise his office in that diocese.<sup>1</sup>

The late Bishop of St. Albans, in a report to Convocation, used these words: "It will be generally admitted that a very large number of the people of this country, though not antagonistic to religion, nor without reverence for Christ, are out of touch with the Church and indifferent to her worship; indifferent, indeed, to public worship in any form whatever.

"An ordained ministry, drawn almost exclusively from the educated classes, seems to need supplementing for evangelistic effort by a lay ministry which, from actual experience of the manner of life of the working classes, is able to enter fully into their thoughts, their difficulties, and their requirements; and the want of such a ministry may be one reason for a certain tendency on the part of the people to look on the Church as a class institution.

"There is a place and a vocation for every faithful member of the Church in right of his

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars as to Trained Evangelists see the Convocation's Resolutions on Brotherhoods and Lay Evangelists, February 4, 1891, Appendix III.

baptism. We must make it clear to the people that we believe this, not only theoretically, but also practically. We must find employment for all those who appear to be called to give themselves to Christ's work. To this end we must enlist the services of men who, belonging to the people, (a) are ready to devote their life wholly to the work, (b) are ascertained by probation and examination to be fit persons for the work, and (c) will work on Church lines in accordance with Church Order."

In 1903 the Archdeacon of Dorset (Ven. C. L. Dundas) succeeded in carrying the following resolution in the Lower House of Canterbury, "That his Grace the President be respectfully requested to appoint a joint-committee to consider the question of restoring an Order of Readers or Sub-deacons in the Church and with power to confer with any similar committee of the Convocation of York, and with the Houses of Laymen."

Such are the steps which the Church in England has authoritatively taken to recognise, restore, or enlarge the ancient order of "Lector." But the methods of America, the Colonial



Churches, and of our own home dioceses, have shown considerable independence of action, and it will be useful to study these if a just idea is to be formed as to what a fully constituted Order may or may not be wisely allowed to do. I have placed in appendices notes relating to the dioceses of York, London, and Rochester; as also the Canons of the Church in America and in the Province of South Africa; and the rules of the diocese of Adelaide. These have been selected as specimens only; for obviously space would not allow of anything like a complete tabulation of all that has been attempted.



## CHAPTER V

### CLASSIFICATION OF READERS

WE have now some evidence before us, as to what the Church in early times required from her Readers, and what in the days of the English Reformation our own branch of the Catholic Church attempted for the special needs of that age, under the guidance of the then Archbishop of Canterbury. We have also looked at the lessons which may be learnt from the almost total discontinuance of the Order of Readers, a discontinuance that may have been due as much to the inefficiency of the men appointed, as to the general decay of Church vigour which led the people to be indifferent as to whether subsidiary ministrations existed or not. Then we have seen how the revival of the Church in the nineteenth century led at once to discussions on the right way of using Lay members, and how this movement among the people found voice presently in the Houses of Convocation of both provinces. Let us now try to sketch what the

shape of the future Order might be, looking at its hopes and fears; bearing in mind the dangers which experience has revealed, as well as those lines which have been already proved to be productive of good.

An individual writer, even if he has had special chances of watching the movement, may well apologise for attempting to sketch what the Church as a whole has not adopted. Still there is at least this reason for doing so, namely, that the councils of the Church are always helped by outside efforts to arrive at truth and wisdom, made honestly and without pretence to infallibility. Moreover, a comparison of the various uses in different dioceses will abundantly show that other men are feeling their way in a similar manner.

Indeed there is advantage in allowing, at present, individual movement. Hitherto we have hardly been ready for concerted Provincial action, nor were the dioceses ripe for the declaration of many absolute rules. Convocation itself has seen this, and has been wisely vague—indeed it might have been advantageous if that body had refrained even more sternly from some of its declarations and definitions, which here and there are not easily reconcilable.

In English Church action, as well as in matters of state politics, it has been not seldom shown that those legislations prove to be the most solid and lasting which we feel after, discuss, and test by years of voluntary effort, before we venture on law-making; while, on the contrary, the ready-made theories which are pressed forward for legislation with much logic and acclaim, prove afterwards to fit very ill with our English ways and thoughts. It is not all evil that church legislation is prevented from being effected very readily; and in the case of the revival and organisation of the Readership, it will, I think, be shown that the Divine Hand has led us in this important matter, first through private and public discussion and then through the practical experimental stage of diocesan action, where rules have been made according to the varying thoughts of individual bishops, tempered by the requirements of local needs. But the hope is, that now soon the time may be found ripe for using this experience, and passing some Provincial measure, which will help men to understand what a Reader really is; preventing the assumption of the title by those who are not qualified, and presently enabling the Readers

themselves to get into touch with one another, and to gain dignity and self-respect as they appreciate more and more a corporate relationship.

This sketch, then, drawn from the observation of what various dioceses have done, as well as from some rather close relationship as Warden of Readers with the men of one diocese, is only intended to be a contribution to that future orderly recognition by central authority, which I hope may not be far off.

That it may not be far off we have, I think, the more reason to wish, because there may arise a certain obstinate irregularity, owing to the fact that men are already shaping themselves and their own courses, for lack of higher guidance.

The unguided movement has proceeded far enough to have created a real danger of our being committed ere long, in different localities, to principles which contradict one another, some of which the Church may regret having to adopt, but may find it very difficult to escape from. The growing usefulness of our Readers; their wholesome self-consciousness; the appreciation which is beginning to be given to them, not only and not always so much from the Clergy, as from audiences of working men, and from districts



of artisan families where they visit; are make-weights which presently may force those who have the final shaping of the movement, to use a great deal of leverage before wrong principles are got rid of and good ones accepted.

An example of the drifting which has already begun, is shown in the very name the Readers bear. "Reader," as we have seen, does not really express the work of these men; nor does any other which has been suggested cover the wide ground which earnest and capable laymen are prepared to occupy. But, partly owing to Convocation debates in early years before it was seen whereunto the thing would grow; and partly by usage, the name is there, and there to stay: and probably there is practical wisdom in allowing it so to be. It shows how the Church of to-day is able to remodel, without destroying, the ancient order of Lector, which has never been quite lost sight of in the varying moods of the English Church. Nevertheless the name itself is a sign-post to show how quickly the office is taking its own shape, and how urgent it is that such great principles and regulations as are needed to order the whole movement aright, should be seen and accepted without much loss of time.

One of the first things necessary for straightening our ideas in this matter, and directing men's energy into orderly ways, is to make some classification of Readers.

At present the term is applied indiscriminately to men who give their whole life as fully as an ordained man does, and to men whose work is confined to some small duty discharged by the devotion of an hour or so a week. This will not do for a system which is to fight its way, as we hope, to great achievements sooner or later in the Church of God: and although there would be a certain fidgetiness and danger in attempting to rule laymen into rigid classes, we shall not get them to feel a proper respect for their position, or rise to its responsibility, unless we give some sign, which the people among whom they work can recognise, that a particular duty is to be expected from a man who carries a certain title.

The one classification which must be earnestly deprecated is that which turns on money. Our Readers being all brothers in the Church, will not wish to accentuate the money question.

True, it would be an excellent thing if we could

soon create a "profession" of Readership, using the term "profession" in its modern familiar sense and not in the religious one. It would be a profession which a young man, perhaps of the lower middle classes, earnest and devout but not educated enough for the priesthood, could adopt as his life-vocation. In the opinion of some far-sighted men, it would be better to turn young men of this quality into a permanent Readership than to force the doors of ordination; better both for the people who receive the ministrations, and better in the long run for the happiness and true dignity of the young man himself. Such a profession, however, to succeed, must have stability. It would need an agreement among the bishops; a form of commission which once given would not need to be given again (although a fresh licence for a fresh sphere of work should be required); a careful examination following on, or previous to, a period of probation; an honourable recognition of its members in diocesan and other gatherings; and, essentially, some provision of a sick fund and an old-age pension. This last should not at present, in the days of small things, be beyond the creation of a Church financier.

The case is very different from that of the Clergy, where the great numbers, the existence of many who may need simultaneous pensions, and the ancient traditions and vested interests of an established church, make any pension scheme a vast undertaking. The Readers for the most part are young, the number likely to come soon on the fund is small, and the whole body of them would be of manageable size; so that I should imagine that it would not be impossible for such a man as Mr. Duncan, who has done so much for Clergy Pensions, to devise something of a business-like character for the Readers. Were this possible, the encouragement to the best young men in the class contemplated to come forward for training, and commit themselves to the Church's discipline, would decidedly receive an impetus.

Such provision would be of the highest utility, but the classification of Readers must not turn on the question of payment for services, any more than it does in the case of Holy Orders. There, happily, men are to be found with private means working for no stipend alongside of men who need every pecuniary help possible; and yet do not allow the world to see any differences



in professional status, or permit themselves to be less under discipline than the men who receive pay. One of the first things to be got rid of is the vulgar distinction between the terms "Amateur" and "Professional," which interprets the one as unpaid and the other as paid. In the Church, all must be amateurs and all must be professionals. We shall always, it is to be hoped, have men at work who need no money, as well as men who need it; but the classification of our men must not follow distinctions which have nothing to do with the work itself.

Nor is the right classification that based on a distinction between men who work in one parish, and men who are free to go about the diocese; the former being admitted in a less dignified way than the latter. For it seems to countenance the notion, which is already sufficiently mischievous, that the gifts which make a show in the world are higher than those valuable ones, which patiently edify souls and fulfil useful duty, in the orderly ways of parochial service. It should not even seem to be held, that a Reader who gives his whole time to some wide, difficult parish, whether he be paid or unpaid, is worthy of less recognition by the bishop, than the man who has the

gift of eloquence, and in his spare days puts those gifts at the disposal of the diocese.

Where then is the true classification?

The main classification would seem to depend upon whether the Reader proposes to devote his whole life to the office. If so, he should belong to the first section, the word "first" not being held to mean pre-eminence. If, on the other hand, the Reader followed some secular calling which was the principal work of his life, and gave his spare time to the Readership, he should be enrolled under the second section.

Since each of these men would be doing his best with his opportunity, no question of precedence should be suggested by any name adopted. But for the sake of management and order, we would make two great parallel sections of Readership, which for the moment may be called Section I. and Section II., although it is to be hoped that some ready wit will discover some happier titles than these. We have said this should be done for the sake of management and order; because it is clear that in forming diocesan rules, those which were needed and applicable to the one section, would often be impossible for the other.

*Sub-Classification.*—Within each of these sec-

tions it would seem necessary that there should be other recognisable classes, some of them requiring different training and different examination from others; some needing more supervision; some holding a licence for work in a single parish, others for duty over a whole diocese.

The laymen who come forward in considerable numbers now, thank God, are, as any one who has had intimate dealing with candidates will know, of remarkable variety in regard to gifts, views, and training. For instance, some have the gift of dealing with souls in the mass; they can preach, or organise, or write, or rule; but they have few gifts when brought face to face with the people over whom, at a distance, they have been able to hold influence. It would be wrong to say for a moment that those far-reaching gifts given to a man, were unreal or hypocritical because they were not fitted for action in detail. It is indeed possible that their possessors may receive too great a share of this world's praise, but they hold God's gifts for His purposes.

Again, others have the gift of dealing with the individual soul. They are the edifiers of those who have perhaps been otherwise stirred. They may possess an intuition, a tact, a delicacy, a per-

sonal courage which are beyond praise, and of the highest use in that quiet work among men, which those responsible for parishes value more highly, taking all in all, than the showy gifts which bring men a name among their fellows. But the possessors of these gifts are by no means always the possessors of the other kind to which we have alluded.

Now it stands to reason that these two kinds of workers need different spheres, different safeguards, different training, different examinations, and, as a consequence, different commissions represented by different forms of licence; and the same thing is true in the case of other kinds of work.

The sub-classification, then, below the two great Sections I. and II. should probably be shown by the form of the *licence* which is given by any individual bishop after a man has received his initial *commission*, which covers all sections, of "Reader in the Church of God."

Let us briefly look now at some of these vocations, and consider the scope and limitation which may be reasonable for each.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE LAY PREACHER

THE licence for general preaching should, as all agree, only be given with great caution. But where any Reader possessed a stirring or edifying gift, combined with sufficient education and knowledge of the Bible and doctrine, to justify his occupying the place of public teacher in the Church, he would be valuable for a wider sphere than a single parish. For such men there should be a form of licence which will enable them to go, with the authority of the bishop, to the help of any priest in the diocese who asks for their services.

More will presently be said as to some kind of sponsorship, which should be demanded, as well as periodical reports to the bishop, to ensure the continuance of orthodoxy, zeal, and blamelessness of life; but the Preacher might under these safeguards be granted, where law permits, something analogous to the same liberty within

the diocese which is now allowed to a deacon licensed to preach.

But the question here arises, Where is a layman, even one licensed by the bishop, legally allowed to preach? There was a time when it was held by authority, not only that no layman could preach at all (see Sir Arthur Charles's opinion, 1884), but that a clergyman could not preach except in consecrated buildings. I remember Bishop Oxenden telling me, that in his curacy days he attempted a work among sailors at a seaport with some success. He opened a room on the quay and gathered a great congregation of men; but presently a cry was raised, that he was a lawbreaker, and the question came to the then Archbishop, who, with many regrets, informed young Mr. Oxenden that his action was illegal, and that he had no other course than to desire him to close his mission, and bring the men into church. This latter was impossible, and the good work fell to the ground. The story seems incredible when compared with what is done everywhere to-day, less than a century after. But it is very certain that the men, who protested against the curate's preaching in the hired room on the quay, would have been

even more astonished, at a layman entering the pulpit of the parish church.

This is done in some dioceses to-day. There are those who deny that any bishop can legally permit a layman to preach in this way; but opinions have been given in opposite directions. Some hold that undoubtedly a bishop may allow the licensed Reader to preach in church at any service. Some do not go so far as this, but believe that the prohibition is only of force with regard to the regular services on Sunday, namely, the Holy Communion, matins, and evensong. These would like the bishops to give laymen permission to preach at afternoon services, other than evensong, at what are called "after-services," and on week-days. Some stoutly deny any power to give leave to preach in consecrated buildings, except in the case of those who are ordained.

The following appeared in the *Guardian* in March 1884:—

"Whilst I think that, having regard to the Twenty-third Article of Religion, the canons of 1604, and the Preface to the Form of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, laymen cannot lawfully publicly

preach or minister the Sacraments, I am of opinion that they may lawfully, in a consecrated building, say the Litany or any other part of Morning or Evening Prayer which is not expressly directed to be said by a priest, provided they are authorised so to do by incumbent and Bishop. It is true that the word 'minister' undoubtedly means ordained minister (Kempe Wickes, 3; Phillimore, 276; *Escott v. Martin*, 4 Moore, P.C., 104; 2 Curteis, 692), and that the rubrics in many instances expressly direct that the 'minister' shall say this or that particular portion of the service, but these rubrics are, in my opinion, directory only, and do not exclude properly authorised laymen from saying such portions, as well as those portions where there is no express rubrical direction.

“ARTHUR CHARLES.

“4 PAPER-BUILDINGS, TEMPLE,  
*February 27, 1884.*”

I do not propose to discuss this legal question; it would be quite unprofitable. A settlement is impossible without reference to the courts.

But this certainly may be said, that the great privilege which is still left to the Church by the law of Church and State, and even more by the



goodwill of the English people, must not be lightly handled.

It is no little thing that the mass of people in England who come to Church at all, are willing, and in many cases really eager, in spite of the Englishman's good-natured grumble, to hear at all events once a week an instruction or an exhortation from a clergyman, so long as he is well-informed, logical, sympathetic with a layman's position, and devout. This is a privilege which the Church should treasure and not squander. It may be that our sermons should be fewer; but, few or many, that leader would serve the English Church well who would evoke a greater sense of the responsibility of preaching, so that ill-prepared sermons, and especially the extempore "few words" (the little thought wrapped up in much talk), should be felt to be unworthy of the preacher's trust. True, our Clergy are often so burdened with week-day work that there is little time for preparation. Possibly the more general use of disciplined Lay work may remedy this, but in any case the question is whether the pulpit shall continue to be acceptable and fulfil the great duty which to-day is undoubtedly open to it.

Such being the case, we must be careful not only as to clerical ability but, *a fortiori*, as to what laymen are admitted to preach. The pulpit is the Church's place of authoritative teaching as well as of exhortation. The theory of the pulpit is not that it is the clergyman's vantage ground, from which he can inculcate his own views on men and things, on poetry and politics, and even on catchwords and mottoes. Rather it is the grave place from which a commissioned man is set to preach, not himself, but Christ Jesus, and to point out to the congregation how the Church, to which both preacher and pulpit belong, views, interprets, and conveys the Gospel of Christ which is to save their souls.

If then the Laity consent to sit in the congregation to listen to preaching, they have a right to demand that no one shall occupy the place from which the teaching of the Church is authoritatively delivered, except those who are properly commissioned. And this commission must be known to imply that the bishop himself has ascertained, by every means possible, that the man he commissions is properly qualified to hold such a position among his fellows. It should be known of the Lay Preacher, that not only in

private life and occupation does he command respect; but that in point of learning and orthodoxy he is worthy of the pulpit.

This is the most reasonable view to take of all authorised preaching, whether in consecrated buildings or unconsecrated ones; but with regard to the former, if Lay preaching at the regular services of Sunday is legal at all, it should be guarded with the utmost care.

With regard to lay preaching in the open air and in unconsecrated buildings, such as mission-rooms and halls, the reasons for care, which have just been advanced, hold good; only modified by the fact that, as the educational standard of the congregation is usually different from that of the regular church-goer, in most of our consecrated churches, the method of preaching will probably be more of a mission kind. A somewhat different level of requirement and examination may, therefore, reasonably be required from those who do not aspire to be preachers in consecrated churches to educated congregations. It might work well, save in exceptional cases, to grant the licence to preach in unconsecrated buildings, to all regular Readers in Section I., and to a large number of Section II., always supposing that they would be

ready to submit to special examination, and even training; and that the bishop was satisfied that they had sufficient preaching ability.

The question of training for preaching, and the part which a bishop may fairly take in it, are important subjects, which it would be interesting to discuss; but probably they lie outside the scope of this book, and in any case to deal with them would unduly extend it.

We may add a few words about a separate class of preachers or speakers—those who come as deputations from great church societies. Where the deputed man is a clergyman the case, of course, falls under the usual diocesan rules. But it is now becoming usual for Lay deputations to plead that their cause is better heard in the church than in the hall. They accordingly ask for permission to occupy the pulpit; and the incumbent, who is told that in this diocese or that leave has been given, is often uncertain what he may lawfully do. I have myself little doubt that no bishop can properly put down the reins so far as to say that even the most worthy society may, without further reference to him, send Lay deputations into the pulpits of his



diocese. But a way out of the difficulty (granted that a consecrated building may be used at all by a layman) might be, that the bishop should allow the principal societies to send him the names of their Lay advocates; and that to these he should give, if he approves the names, licences for general use renewable every year. These men should be excused from keeping the usual diocesan rules, which govern the corporate life of Readers in that diocese; but it should be fully recognised by the clergy that the Lay deputations of any society, not yet placed upon the diocesan list, are not to be allowed to preach in Church without special reference to the bishop.

It would be impossible to bring the Lay preaching of a diocese into any order at all, or to claim for the bishop's formal licence any respect, if Readers who have duly qualified are to see strangers allowed to preach without episcopal authority.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LAY CURATE

BUT there are other vocations for Readers, quite as honourable as that of Preacher, and open to those who may not have the gift of eloquence.

One of the most valuable of all is that of the man who may be called the Lay Curate. This man would hold a purely parochial licence, but within his province he would have ample occupation. In church, if he did not preach, he might be allowed to assist the clergy greatly. He might read the lessons and most of the Litany too. According to Sir A. Charles, he might read Morning and Evening Prayer, except the small portion reserved for a priest. In any case he could, on the rare occasions when there was no priest or deacon available, conduct a service allowed by the bishop, consisting of prayers, psalms, hymns, Bible-reading, and the reading of some authorised sermon. He would be of use in the service of the sanctuary, and the time may come, although it has

not come yet, when he might, under special circumstances, administer the chalice. There are precedents, too, as we have seen, for a Reader burying the dead, baptizing infants in emergency, churching women, and formally visiting the sick, although of course with the omission from the Visitation Service of the priestly parts.

It would not be safe to-day for an incumbent to permit his Reader to do any of these things without further inquiry from his bishop; but there is precedent in the Church for such things to be done.

And, apart from these ministrations, what a field of happy, holy usefulness and activity is open to the parochial Reader, working with the full recognition of his vicar and bishop, in touch with all that goes on in diocesan life, trusting and trusted, strengthened and sheltered by the commission of his Church.

The man, who might fairly shrink from doing these things as a free-lance, saying to himself, "Who am I, and what is my level of holiness, that I dare take upon myself the task of pointing out the way to other men, who, God being Judge, may be as acceptable as I am?" may, after his commission, justly say, "I do not come of

myself. I come as one that is sent by that Church to which is entrusted the great responsibility of promoting the religion of this land. I am what I am; but I believe that the humblest instrument, working under the right authority, has a power which is not its own. I come from my Master, and His grace is sufficient for me." These are the men who some day may prove to be the best answer to the question, "What are we to do because of the dearth of Clergy?" They will take the burden of a hundred details off the shoulders of the parish priest. They will often be able to go where he cannot go; to do what he cannot do. The very fact that there is a difference of standing between the two will not be without its usefulness; and between two men acting under the same spiritual sending there should be no social difficulty. The priest will do priestly things, and the Reader (I am now contemplating a man in Section I., and therefore giving his life to the calling) will do many of those other important duties in a parish, which must be done by the staff, but do not of necessity require the gift of Holy Orders. The schools, the club, the care of young men and of boys, the choir, the belfry, the cricket-field, some



sick-rooms, the day of temporal shadow and of temporal joy, as well as the spiritual word in season, will bring to the single-hearted, regular Reader a life of full employment and of great joy. He will be no slight sharer of the burden of the parish priest, who is his chief, and also his brother in the Lord.

And what of the man whose absence from Holy Orders to-day we greatly regret? I mean the conscientious man, who debars himself from the priesthood, because he dreads taking a step so irrevocable. To such an one the recognised post of the Lay Curate would give nearly all the openings for service, which he at present desires, without his being committed for ever; and it is likely that such a time of probation would definitely reveal to him his call.

*The Teacher.*—There is, however, a special work which would require for the Reader a wider licence than the parish one. I mean the accredited *Teacher* in religious knowledge.<sup>1</sup> All clergy have not the art of teaching. Unfortunately it does not follow that, because a man's mind is well stored, he is able to impart his store to others.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that this is given as the first of the functions of a Reader in Bishop Lightfoot's Convocation Report.

We have all heard of the successful tutor of young men reading for minor examinations, who was so successful because he himself had been repeatedly plucked. It is therefore no slur on the mental store of the Clergy, to say that, if the religious teaching in the schools depended on the Clergy only, the result in some parishes might not be brilliant.

Whether the time will come for all religious teaching, given to the children of our elementary day schools, to be out of hours or out of school ; or whether the conscience of the nation will insist on religion of some definite sort being taught in school, as a vital part of the education of every child ; in either case there will arise a demand for practical, experienced Lay teachers of Church truth. In the great towns, by an arrangement of hours, one man might give his services to several schools. If he were not wanted in any one school every day, the number of schools which he might serve with regularity and skill might be fairly numerous. Then there is abundant room for trained teaching in our Sunday schools. We have lived too long on the methods of Sunday school teaching which did pretty well before the days of the Educa-

tion Act of 1870. But thirty years of greatly improved popular education find the Sunday schools (save, of course, in exceptional parishes) very little in advance of former days; although the power of reception and criticism in the scholars has made great strides. The Church to-day ought not to be satisfied with two irregularly attended fragments of Sunday instruction, nor with schools in which the children sometimes rejoice because they are at school for once without discipline. Nor should she be content with teachers, who too often have taken scant trouble to perform that difficult task of so preparing their lesson as to be able to keep the attention of the children by a mind and eye alert. There are very many magnificent Sunday schools which could be named; and very many self-sacrificing teachers who are doing splendid work. But the indifferent ones exist, and invaluable chances are being lost. Just as, in the matter of preaching, the Church holds a valuable vantage ground, which unless she take care she may one day lose; so in her Sunday schools she has a magnificent opportunity: but the general system of to-day is neither by method nor effective teaching such as will satisfy for long the aspirations of a better-educated generation.

In catechising, too, in Church on the St. Sulpice and other systems, where the licensed Reader may fairly be in his place, what a scope there is for a man, with teaching power and zeal for the souls of children, to do one of those works which often bring a seen and quick reward. Few things are so delightful to a worker as to learn, as often he may, that the great and lasting and saving principles of a man's or a woman's life have been gained in the religious week-day hour or the Sunday school.

At Confirmation time the clergyman's work is more helped, and his time more saved, than those who have not had experience can imagine, by the solidity of the Day and Sunday school teaching. In my parish days I found that my candidates who came up from the Elementary School met me half-way in the Confirmation class. Whereas, alas! often the whole way had to be travelled, with those "upper" classes of society, where there is no door open to the teacher of religion such as he has when he ministers to the poor.

The Teaching Reader who knew his subject might take half the work, even during the final weeks of Confirmation preparation; and by giving the preparation of the head, he would



leave the clergyman freer for the preparation of the heart.

*The Almoner.*—There is another opening of a kind very suitable for the clear-headed and warm-hearted Reader. The question of judicious almsgiving, in our town parishes especially, has long occupied the minds of those who, on the one hand, desire to increase thrift and self-respect among the poor, and on the other recognise that the relief of the needy has its true place in Christian work. There is little doubt that the man who satisfies his compassionate feeling, without using the forethought and inquiry necessary to wise almsgiving, is in danger of increasing, rather than diminishing, human misery. Mr. Brooke-Lambert's saying, quoted in an excellent report on Almsgiving of the Rochester Conference, 1903, that "our aim must be to relieve cases and not our own feelings," may well be remembered by the pitiful.

But such thought and inquiry, even with the aid of the C.O.S. and similar societies, require in large parishes more time than the parish priest can well spare. The sad examples, to be found constantly, in which hypocrisy and double dealing are encouraged by uniting in the same hand

relief and spiritual ministration, make it at least questionable whether those whose duty it is to evangelise or edify—priest, layman, or woman—should ever appear personally as the distributors of alms.

What is needed is an officer who is so completely identified with the church of the parish as to be a suitable channel for distributing relief, yet aloof from direct spiritual ministration. The money which is offered in the highest act of worship is by virtue of its origin a most sacred and solemn trust. And it must be so distributed as to avoid the danger of breeding cant, a danger which is widespread, and well understood among the working classes. So keenly indeed is it felt that some of our best poor are kept back from professing any religion at all, because attendance at church or chapel is viewed as a kind of touting for temporal advantages.

The causes of absence of our working men from church are often debated, but it is not enough insisted on that there are those among them who cannot yet distinguish between church-going and the relief which in their independent moods they will not have. Still less will they allow their mates to imagine that they are

seeking it. Fear of seeming hypocritical, fear of seeming dependent, are more largely the reasons for our town men's absence from public worship than either fear of priestcraft or unbelief.

An "Almoner Reader," supported by a council of other parishioners, and in close touch with the clergy and district visitors, might supply a real want; and a very interesting occupation it would be to any man who had an instinct for social affairs.

Such a Reader would often find it easier than the parson to put himself into direct communication with neighbouring parishes, with the Nonconformist chapels, with friendly societies, hospitals, Guardians, and all the local sources of relief. It is probable that the religious bodies outside the Church, who are as well aware as we are of the overlapping and trickery which exist, would be ready to meet a candid and fair-minded layman in cordial co-operation; and public bodies have repeatedly expressed a wish for something of the kind.

Our Reader, entering on such a calling with a good will and an open mind, would soon find that he was saving the alms of his Church from waste right and left, and thus setting free money to

build up really deserving cases, where heretofore patching was the only possible course.

Surely the time has come, even in self-defence, for the good professors of various religious views to drop competition and suspicion in matters of relief, and come into council with any secular or religious agency which is at hand. They could agree to work upon some fair system, which would achieve the temporal advantage of the poor, and at the same time ensure that true spiritual effort should go upon its own merits, unhindered by any danger of hypocrisy.

May it not be said in all seriousness that if laymen will systematically and wisely undertake this task, for which they are exceedingly well fitted, parish priests with large parishes ought not any longer to give their time to it, when the sick, the dying, the sad, and the sinful are not yet fully tended? Here, then, let us eagerly enlist our permanent Reader.

The same man, or another, if the churchwarden be too busy, may become the financier of other money matters affecting church and parish. But space forbids our discussing further the openings of work which are waiting for such a layman.



*The Lecturer.*—In a wider area than the parish, there is place for a different kind of Reader from any hitherto mentioned. He might with great profitableness set himself to study social and religious problems, and hold himself ready to give addresses or lead debates on these topics. For instance, temperance lecturers are common enough who eagerly address audiences on the danger and sin of drunkenness: but it is not so easy to find the man who, ably and dispassionately, will discuss the whole question with thoughtful artisans, dealing with its hopes and possibilities from several points of view, in regard to legislation, prevention, or disease. He might, again, take as his subject biblical criticism, or economic questions, or health. In fact, the scope for the fair-minded man who was ready to face our working men intellectually and without airs or condescension, in lecture and debate, is boundless. He would find his days full of interest, and make many friends among the brothers for whose advantage he had stored his mind.

*The Choirmaster.*—May not much be said for the Choirmaster or Organist holding the bishop's solemn commission? It is true that in some

churches very great care is taken that the surplice worn by the choirman shall be understood by him to imply that purity of character and intention which is required in one who ministers before the Lord, and leads His praises in the very sanctuary of the church. But in other churches, where the harassed priest has no time for the detailed personal care of the choir, the organist is the leader. And he, although a most estimable man, is often apt, with natural professional instinct, to think first of all of the excellence of the music, and only second of the spiritual life of the choirman.

In country parishes, and in little places, the conditions are different. Every one is known, and the conduct of the choir is open to accurate public opinion. But those who have oversight in great towns often cannot help wondering whether the surpliced singers, seated between the clergy and the altar, and uttering the most sacred psalmody, are prepared for their office by making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Few people could bring this about better than a manly, religious layman in the post of organist or choir-master. We have delightful examples in memory of men who are already doing this high work.

Their holding of the bishop's licence would dignify the body of Readers, and at the same time enhance and foster their own sense of responsibility.

Such are specimens, and only specimens, of the openings which are constantly ready for the Laity of the Church. But they are sufficient, perhaps, to show, not only that there is room for gifts of a varied kind; but that any diocesan scheme which is to deal with all sympathetically, and give to each individual his due place and recognition, cannot be adopted with any rough and ready plan of licence, nor without probation.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DISCIPLINE

AMONG the principles which call for settlement, ere it be too late, is the amount of discipline proper to Readership.

There are matters concerning mode of admission and of dismissal which would be the better if all dioceses could act together. There is also the urgent question as to who is to be responsible, as time goes on, for the Reader's continuance in well-doing, his performance of duty, his proper attitude to the authority in his parish, his orthodoxy, zeal, and blamelessness of life. For it is not impossible that an eager man, left to himself, may drift into mistakes. Some safeguard also in our orderly Church must be made against intrusion into spheres of work for which there has been no episcopal sanction, nor even permission from the incumbent. The more zealous the worker, the more popular the vocation, the more possibility there is for irregularities to



arise, which may be quite unintentional in their origin, but are none the less difficult to get over. Those who have even slight experience of the trend of the Reader movement can see that it may readily get out of hand. There was an instance not long ago, of a Reader of some standing declaring that he so far disagreed with his bishop that he did not wish to meet him in conference; yet all the while he was appearing as representing that bishop, by virtue of his licence. But short of eccentricities such as this, which would never be common, it is plain that we may easily be committed to precedents which it will be hard to reverse. So also, for lack of rule, we may lose into the ranks of the free-lances men whose earnestness would have been of the highest value to us, and whom we might have kept, if we had been able, at the outset of their work, to explain to them what were the leading conditions on which they could carry the commission of the Church; conditions which they would have kept, had they known them before they adopted the looser methods.

The clergy, too, at present are sometimes placed in a difficult position. They are met by the offer of services from men, even calling themselves

“Readers,” who carry no definite licence from their own bishop. They are asked to allow their schools and mission rooms, and even their pulpits, to be used by deputations and by men who, zealous as they may be, are but spokesmen of some transient society, set up to advocate only one side of a great truth. The incumbent who refuses is open to the charge of illiberality and woodenness. I believe that our best Clergy are longing for a less congregational system than now obtains in the towns, and for more distinct diocesan action and unity. Such men would be greatly relieved if there existed some standing rules on this subject, to which they could readily refer. Irregularities occur sometimes without the Clergy having the least intention of acting against rule. Moreover, the Laity certainly have a right to ask that their Clergy should not expose them to what seems, from the position which the Lay speaker is allowed to occupy, to be the teaching of authority, and yet has no authority from the Church at all.

*Licences.*—The question of discipline naturally carries us to an inquiry as to licences and the conditions under which they may be issued or withdrawn.

As to the actual form of licence, it is sufficient here to recall, what has been argued above, that while its general character should be uniform, it would assist the good order of Readership, if in detail it varied according to the class of work for which it was issued. But both Convocation and our diocesan authorities are fairly agreed that licences should come from the bishop himself, and be conferred solemnly at a service, with the presentation of a Bible or New Testament, but without "the laying on of hands." The observance of this last matter is plainly of great importance. No sign of benediction should be used, that could be taken by the Reader to imply the creation of an Order which claims "the laying on of hands." In some dioceses it is the use of the bishop merely to take the candidate by the right hand in admitting him; a general benediction being reserved for the close of the service.

Some distinction will of course be made between the service which admits a man permanently into the Order of Reader and the granting of the licence which gives him permission to serve in a particular diocese.

*Examination.*—But there are preludes to licence and consequences following it, not yet brought

into general agreement, which it may be all the better to consider now; because there is as yet no general agreement about them.

The first of these is the *entrance examination*.

That there should be something of the kind prescribed for all, without favour or exception, I have now, after experience, no doubt. When I first became intimately concerned with this branch of diocesan affairs I found that the idea of examination, being new, was viewed with dread. Men who had formed a loose conception of the position of a Reader were inclined to resist what they thought was an unnecessary impediment. Others, such as those who had taken a University degree, or had achieved high positions, say, as members of Parliament, or as holding some other official place, possibly considered it below their dignity to submit to an examination by the Chaplains of the Order of Reader. But in no case did I ever find a man of that quality refuse to be examined when he came to understand that it was precisely men of his rank who must set the lead and accept discipline, if lesser men were to be brought into that marching order which is necessary if the Readership is to take an effective place.



But, of course, the examination must be no rigid thing, nor of the same level for all alike. The object of the examination is not the examination, nor the keeping of any red tape requirement. It is to ensure that the man who goes forth with the bishop's licence has such a knowledge of the Bible, and of the Church's interpretation of it, as will justify his carrying a commission. It requires but a moment's thought to see that in free England, every man may speak if he can get an audience to listen to him, or even without that if it pleases him. But the very badge or tippet which the Reader wears is a token that the bishop has satisfied himself that all is well. Indeed without such care on the bishop's part the congregation would be misled into receiving what, if left to their own judgment, they would not have accepted.

The examination, therefore, should be conducted with great insight and tact. Sometimes it may be merely oral; sometimes more precise and written; and sometimes it may consist in the recommendation of certain books, and the discussion of them after an interval of probation. Again, the examination will vary with the kind of work, and with the place in which the work is

to be done. Preachers, visitors, almoners, musicians give to the Lord different gifts, as the Lord has given to them. To ascertain fitness, the inquiry will follow suitable lines. Again, the Preacher to an educated congregation, who has himself, perhaps, passed through a great university, will need to refresh his learning in special directions. But he will require a different examination from the excellent, fervid fellow who comes from the ranks, and earnestly desires to deliver his message to the men whose thoughts and lives he knows.

The examination ought to make us lose no one except the foolishly self-satisfied, and the obstinately unorthodox; but it ought to better the good, and stimulate the thoughtful by suggesting to them fresh sources of thought.

*Renewal of Licence.*—Then follows the question whether the bishop's licence ought to last indefinitely, without supervision or renewal. It seems agreed that a Reader once solemnly admitted, after due precaution, is admitted for life and for all dioceses, unless he is solemnly deprived; subject, of course, to his receiving from the bishop of each diocese to which he goes, licence to perform his functions in that particular

diocese. But granting that, we now ask, Is the bishop to assure himself that those functions continue to be properly performed? For certainly they may not be so. An enthusiastic young man, put down among people who are far below him in spiritual apprehension, and the sole source whence religious heat radiates out to his surroundings, may easily himself become cold, especially if the Clergy under whom he works are remote or preoccupied. He is still, perhaps, a young man beset by temptations and sustained by little high public opinion about him. He may by his very zeal or sympathy become open to many attacks of infidelity or unorthodoxy.

It seems little short of cruel to leave such a man alone, without any system of recall or opportunity for the renewal of his first intentions, hopes, and faith. We take much care of our young deacons, and yet our zealous young Readers are often simply dismissed to their work, without further thought being given to them by the diocese whose name they bear.

One preventive which has been found effective is a rule that to each Reader a friendly sponsor should be appointed, who must be a parish priest

holding licence in the diocese—preferably his own incumbent. This plan demands that the bishop should talk seriously with the sponsor and with the Reader, dwelling on the harm which comes to the ministration of the Gospel when the character of its minister is open to criticism. He could then explain to both, that there would be a yearly report required on three points—orthodoxy, zeal, and blamelessness of life; and, further, that the licence will be renewable every year, but only on the request of the incumbent in whose parish the work may lie, and on production of his testimonial on these three points. Such a provision will meet with no opposition from those who are not afraid of it; while to the humble, the yearly recurrence to the bishop will be a strength and encouragement. To those who are doing badly it will be a check.

Should some layman of high character demur to what may seem to him a plan savouring of tutelage, he will, I think, reflect that the very condition of corporate life implies dependence one on another. So viewed, the yearly testimonial of an esteemed clergyman, stating that the standard of excellence, which was accepted



at the outset as suitable to so serious a commission, is still maintained, can only appear as a happy and thankful recognition of a year's good work. He will see too here, as in the case of the examination, that, the greater the Reader, the more bound he is to show the way towards all reasonable and edifying discipline.

One objection, however, which must be met, is that in the case of a jealous or fanciful incumbent, it might put the Reader unreasonably in his power. Yet it must be remembered that the incumbent is, after all, the responsible person for the work of his parish, and it is possible that there may be fanciful Readers as well as fanciful priests. But, even suppose an incumbent to be maculate and the Reader immaculate, the happiest thing for the Reader, in case of disagreement, is to put his services at the bishop's disposal and get to work where his energy will be unimpeded.

There will, however, be cases in which the work which the bishop's commission permits is of so wide a character in the diocese, that there would be no one incumbent who could well be selected as the Reader's sponsor-friend. These cases must be dealt with according to their circumstances.

The referee might, in one instance, be the chaplain of the Order of Readers; in another, if the Reader be a deputation from a society, he might be the president of the society. But what we are concerned here to suggest is that, to keep the general character of the Order of Readers bright, and to help the men themselves who are often sadly isolated, the system of the friendly sponsor is in practice advantageous.

*Dependableness.*—The thoughts on discipline will not be complete without indicating one practical matter which is of the highest importance to the clergy with whom the Readers work, I mean dependableness. It is grievous, now and again, to hear it urged, even by those who desire to see parochial work fortified by the aid of responsible laymen, that, unless the worker is paid, there is not sufficient hope of his regularity to make it possible to commit important organisations to his care. This is a great slur on us. The complaint is exceptional; but sufficiently frequent to make it useful to point out how large a part the sense of duty must play, in the performance of any scheme of Lay work. As soon as it becomes a matter of public opinion among churchmen that all are called to bear their part, no

doubt the same public opinion which makes itself known about a neglectful clergyman will be brought to bear on others who accept a duty without fulfilling it.

The question of the looseness of what is called amateur work is one which is perfectly well known to clergymen, who are anxious to bring the richer and poorer classes together in parish operations. It would be idle, in spite of splendid exceptions, to ignore it. One of the first results, therefore, of the acceptance of a place in the Vineyard of the Master should be the grasp of the fact, that the question of pay or no pay is immaterial; and that, in either case alike, the time required for the performance of the duty undertaken should have a first call on the life.

*Dismissal.*—We have said that the Reader, once solemnly admitted, should not be admitted again; but only licensed afresh when he either changes his work or his diocese. Yet, alas that we must contemplate it! It cannot be that a Reader, who has ceased to retain the confidence of the Church, should still be allowed to bear the title of one of her officers. No corporate action is possible, nor can a society maintain its character and self-respect, unless there is provision for the pruning

off of unworthy members. Happily it is not necessary here to describe possible instances. They have been most rare, and there are not many precedents to quote. But there should be always a well-understood power, reserved to the bishop, to refuse the renewal of licence, or to suspend it for a period of probation, or, in extreme cases, to cancel even the original admission into the Order of Readers in the Church of God, and in that case to make known the fact to the other bishops.

But, from the need of such discipline, God protect our rising Order of Readers!

*Relation to the Diocese.*—A sense of corporate diocesan existence among the Readers is of high value. It should encourage that brotherliness and mutual help in work, which is the goodly heritage of those who have the same Head and fight in the same cause. Anything which can bring the Readers together for discussion, social intercourse, and the like, keeps alive zeal, and sweetens where otherwise distrust and sourness may come in. It will be helpful if once, or better twice, in the year there be a meeting at the bishop's house for exchange of friendliness and debate, at which meeting the Reader should feel



it to be his bounden duty to be present, unless he be formally excused. If there be a chaplain whose whole work lies with Readers (and a most valuable diocesan officer he may become), he will do well to search for further opportunities and means, to get the men together either in deaneries or groups of those who are engaged in the same kind of work. This would let men know that what they do is understood and recognised by the diocese, more completely than can be done by large mass-gatherings of all the men together unclassified. Should it be objected, that all this must greatly increase diocesan work; the answer, we trust, may be that it is reasonable that it should be so, if a great organisation of regulated Lay help is to be called into being, and to work effectively.

*The Reader's Reading.*—There is, however, a danger to which all earnest workers are exposed. It is the tendency to get so absorbed in the work or parish that the heart narrows into a very unwholesome and damaging exclusiveness. Half our prejudices and divisions have in them a real uncharitableness and forgetfulness of the position of others, often bred in us by otherwise excellent and earnest habits of thought and action which

ought to have brought us near to God, but have been spoilt by religious egotism. We have gradually come to stand apart and forget that the strength of any limb depends upon its relation and service to the whole body. We must try to counteract this, not only by pressing our Readers to meet their fellows and form habits of intercession in which they call for blessing upon those with whom they disagree as well as those who follow their own mode of thought; but also by urging them to keep a wide mind, reading other books than those which are needed for their special work, not omitting those of a different school of thought from that which they find most congenial.

For this purpose, in one diocese at least, it has been found useful that the bishop should indicate a book each half-year, which all Readers are expected to read, and which comes up for discussion at the half-yearly meeting at the bishop's house. Once it happened that the book so set dealt with a burning question in a manner so different from that which had always been accepted by a certain Reader, that he declared the worst book in his house to be the one chosen by his bishop! The bishop for his part

felt that this was the first time his friend had been made to hear the other side; and that he was by so much the more effective in dealing with the inquiring men among whom his work lay, men whom he earnestly desired to save. Anyhow, no loss of friendship occurred between the bishop and the outspoken Reader.

In the diocese of Rochester much effort is made to encourage a Reader to keep an eye, not only on the intellectual storage needed for his particular work, but also on maintaining a lively interest in current topics likely to be interesting to the men among whom he goes. And in the diocese of London great care in this direction is taken by the Diocesan Readers' Board. There also the St. Paul's Lecture Society and Retreats offer to the men a constant supply of theological and spiritual training of a high order, suited to intelligent laymen, which should furnish them with matter of the best quality, useful not only for their own personal edification, but as preparing them to give instruction to others. Busy Londoners attend the St. Paul's lectures in increasing numbers; and there would seem no reason why other large towns should not provide the same kind of help

and follow the great cathedral of London in this, as in some of the other ways by which St. Paul's has proved the utility of the cathedral system. Country districts, where Readers should find at least as fine a sphere as in the towns, will of course require different treatment. But the point cannot be sufficiently pressed that, whether in town or country, for the success of their work and the continuance of respect for their office, all Readers should be given every encouragement, and even be pressed by authority, to keep as high an intellectual level as possible.

The Diocese of London, through the Board which arranges the annual training course for Readers of all dioceses, is keenly alive to this, and has enlisted the active support of colleges both at Oxford and Cambridge. The Rev. J. O. F. Murray of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, now Warden of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, would give information upon this matter. Briefly it may be stated that, in the summer vacation of each year, Readers are invited for two weeks or less to stay at either Keble College, Oxford, or Selwyn College, Cambridge. Here they live a collegiate life and hear lectures and receive personal help from some of the best uni-



versity graduates. The course is not without its advantage in the happy social life enjoyed by those who go up, which makes the stay a summer recreation and gives them a useful opportunity of comparing methods and exchanging thought. But it aims at a great deal more than this. It should send the Readers home inspired with greater ideas and fresh determination to keep their mental gifts bright for the service of their Master. And perhaps even more important is the fact that here men of every party in the Church learn to live and worship and debate happily together as true brothers.

*Preliminary Training.*—To many men, especially to those whose Lay work is of necessity not the main work of their lives, anything like complete training must be impossible. It may even be true that, except in the matter of storing the mind with accurate theology, the ordinary vocations of the Reader may be performed by the light of his own experience in life. He will have in some measure learnt from his own spiritual combat, a knowledge of the difficulties which surround the Christian. It would be a mistake and untrue if the preparation were

so magnified as to deter those who otherwise might volunteer. A mistake, because there is plenty of work for men who have had no special training. Untrue, because a great deal of the work in question can never be prepared for in the training college, however excellent the college may be. It can only be felt after, and faced out, as men get to work, and attempt to deal with the variations and surprises of the human heart. A merely seminarist Reader may be as great a failure in dealing with men, as a merely seminarist priest. Nevertheless there is little doubt that, for those who propose to take Readership as a life's profession, a year or more of careful training in a college, such as that of the S.P.C.K., followed by a period of probation in a sphere of practical experience, would produce a more useful man. The S.P.C.K. College training period is one year; the student pays £5 a term, or £15 a year, unless he has been granted a free studentship. Candidates must be communicants between the ages of 21 and 40; and when the period of training is over, the men go out to work at stipends ranging from £65 to £85 per annum. The Bishop of London's licence must be gained

before the student can go out to work as "an S.P.C.K. man."

Training is also given by the Church Army. It consists of nine months' experience in one of their mission vans, three months at the Central Institute, and one year's probation under the guidance of some experienced vicar. No payment is required.

There is also an opportunity of training to be found at the Evangelist Brothers' Home at Wolverhampton; the course is at least one year. The Bishop of Lichfield is visitor, and his licence must be gained before beginning work. No payment is required for training, but the men when trained are expected to place their services at the disposal of the Brotherhood for work in our colonies as well as at home.

The time may not be far off when every diocese will have its own training house for Lay workers. Few things would be more agreeable to a bishop's mind than to create in his cathedral city a "Lay-house" where he could place young laymen who desired to make Readership the vocation of their lives, where older men could reside for short periods of special training, and where all who are definitely

at work could find a welcome from time to time.

Such a house as the central office of all Lay work, with a man of ability at the head of it, will probably be a necessary part of diocesan organisation when regular Lay work takes its proper place.



## CHAPTER IX

### RELATION OF THE CLERGY TO THE PERSONAL RELIGION OF THE READER

WE have hitherto been considering the various ways in which Lay work can be made more valuable and efficient. But the Clergy need not be reminded that the spring of all effective and valuable work in the Church of God, is in the inner life of the soul.

I am therefore led to insert a chapter dealing with this, the root of the whole matter. I put myself, as long experience enables me to do, into the place of an incumbent who has Readers working with him. As such I know that my first duty is to set forth to them a high ideal of a Reader's inward life.

One word of caution first. If I so did this as to deter a man from offering himself to God in the Lay work of the Church, I should grievously have missed my mark. I can vividly recall fears besetting the mind of one who, on the eve of

his ordination, was so oppressed with dread, lest the ideal should not be attained, that he nearly went back. I remember his doubts and the attack on his faith too well not to have full sympathy with any man who dreads to accept his call lest he should prove unable to reach the ideal which has been set before him. We must warn our Readers that the acceptance of a high standard for oneself does not condemn every failure to reach it. If they take count of the lives of men whose ideal, and whose preached ideal, was far beyond what is common to men, such for example as that of St. Francis of Assisi, it will be found that, consciously and unconsciously, the life was a continuous experience of failure; and that in them failure was redeemed, and a great measure of success was granted, only because their ideal was high. To set a noble aim and only partly to succeed is not hypocrisy, nor is it quixotic folly. It is the honest struggle of the soul to reach its best. The noble side of the poet's or the artist's life is to be found in the fact that he sees a beauty which ordinary men fail to see. He trains himself to understand the springs, condition, and tendency of what lies before him. His greatness depends on how far he can open the eyes

of men to the wonderful things of the Creator. But he never reaches his own ideal. Yet his power would be gone the moment his eyes ceased to gaze on that far-off perfection of which he has had visions. So also with men who tread the work-a-day road. That man reaches most who aspires to the most perfect condition that his being permits. Poor and grovelling in the end is the state of the one who always lets "I dare not, wait upon I would," and fears to make high flights in work and faith, in love of mankind and in discipline of his inward life, for fear that men should see a shortcoming, or that he should have to admit to himself that he has aimed too high. Once there was a man who all his life was servant to a besetting sin because he dared not believe that he had power to be better than he was, or make any resolution lest it should be broken. One day he learnt that the Indwelling Power of God was stronger than the natural power of man. He flung himself upon that Power and cried, "My God, undertake for me, not because I am strong, but because I am weak," and the grace of God was sufficient. There is One beyond our ideal Who can bring it nearer than we dream.

Let us, then, place before our Readers the thought, and constantly renew it, that the motive of Lay work and the strength which makes it possible come from the fact that the baptized are members of the Spirit-bearing Body of Christ. It is right, therefore, that effort should be made so to rule the life, so to set up a standard of what should be, that in some measure at least, according to our circumstance and ability, we may be worthy of that Body, not only in what we do but in what we *are*. We must urge them to keep fresh in their minds, by any means which seem profitable, whether by quiet, fixed times of meditation or by recurrent petitions in prayer, or as part of the regular preparation for Communion, the origin of the work which they have undertaken. We must warn them to take care lest the fret of doing their daily duties, and the lower things which surround them, obscure the pure thought which first inspired their acceptance.

For what is the true history of the call to do these things? It began with Baptism. Our licensed lay-brother was made a member of Christ and a child of God. He broke out, in that new birth, into the new world of the King-



dom of Heaven. The call was made stronger, and more possible, when in Confirmation the gift of the Holy Spirit became as truly his own individual possession for the work of his own soul, and for such other work as God might lead him to, as in Ordination the same Holy Spirit came to you for work as a priest among the souls of men. Such was the history of his vocation. The call was unnoticed, perhaps. But in due time the tremendous needs of our dear land, the piteous cry of humanity, the sin and the pain of the crowded city or the soddenness of the neglected village, woke up his hearing, and he heard God's Voice at last and came—came believing that what he put at God's disposal, however few the loaves might be, would be blessed and multiplied, and that there was a Power which could make the humblest, somehow and somewhere, an able minister of God's good things.

He has half forgotten his splendid start? He has become depressed and disappointed? Well, send him back to his first aspiration. Probably there is need of some inquiry into self. The worker for God has his special temptations, and he needs the grace of watchfulness. No leader

of Readers is faithful who does not warn the worker that, while he escapes some temptations of the ordinary world, and is brought near to God by his effort to serve men, there are temptations which accompany that very approach to God. There is much truth, if this be forgotten, in the old proverb, "The nearer the Church, the farther from God." The Reader must know himself; distinguishing sharply between these two things, what people who praise him say, and what God sees. He must try to disentangle the convolutions of self-congratulation; and at another time the equally untrue complications of self-distrust. To do this he must use the mirror of the simple Gospel standard, not as society accepts it, but just as the New Testament sets it forth. It is not difficult so to argue with oneself upon right and wrong, by the light of public opinion, as to be altogether confused. Yet I believe that the quiet submission of a man's personal problems to the question, "What would have been accepted as the right line, *mutatis mutandis*, by the writers of the Gospels and Epistles," will, to the honest inquirer, bring a vision of what his duty is.

Next, let us aid the Church's Reader to make

systematic effort to link together work and prayer. *Laborare est orare* never meant that diligence in the one is to exclude the other. Some of the best work takes its spring in the offering of the plan at the first available Celebration. The happiest ending to the outcome of that plan is when its results are taken into church and laid at the Feet of Christ. The effort to do this should be as unobtrusive as possible. Indeed we must dread much talk, much exchanging of experience, except so far as there is a direct intention of edification. It is best to guard his lips, like our own, against formal phrases, catchwords, and unreal expressions; to learn to know and avoid the snare of the "religious" manner, and the religious voice. Who will teach him, if we cannot, to dread as a poisonous thing the danger of playing with God and conscience, by attributing to those sacred sanctions things which are really matters of man's ambition or man's will or even of personal assumption? Assuredly he will be the more able to do this if he dreads being much praised. For, let us think of it, the universally popular man is rarely sincere; it would be hard for him to keep his popularity if he were. It is not easy to take any straight

line and not lose some friend or seeming friend. A man may go through life balancing and weighing and debating with his friends as to the merits of this cause or that; but once let him be convinced, let him set his face and take his line according to his conviction, and he will find that there are those who will fall away.

The Reader may compare his course with ours. Who does not know that the world often judges falsely of a clergyman by his outward success? One who listens with devouring ears, to some moving speech in pulpit, on platform, or in committee, says to himself, "I will see these things bearing their fruit, in the hidden streets of this great man's parish or in the intimacy of his home." But he comes back distressed at the difference between theory and practice. We know that a large congregation is not always the result of hard work, nor even of an absolutely honest exposition of "the Mind of Christ"; nor is a small congregation always a sign that no true answer is being given to the pastor's call. In hasty, busy England we cannot stop long enough to inquire how deep a man's work goes; we estimate it by what we half see and hear. Such



judgment is easy, and we reward and praise those whose presentment is attractive. But so little are praise and recognition the infallible measures of desert that wise men learn to dread them. This should be true of the best of our Readers. God is our judge, not the newspaper.

There is another thought perhaps worth attention. What of enthusiasm? Let restraint mingle with it. True enthusiasm, springing from conviction, with full outlook as to what may be accomplished, a power of seizing the opportunity, a spirit which will dash forward and capture—such zeal as this is urgently needed. But there should be some shapeliness in enthusiasm, some gifts of reserve, and the restraint which prunes off its wasteful shoots, lest it become gush and be despised. God is a God of order.

And this restrained enthusiasm, kept in hand by reasonable prudence and common sense, will make Readers who are resolved not to undertake more than they can properly do. As soon as a man is known to be capable or willing, all the over-pressed workers within call make efforts to secure him. The wise man will take time to consider ere he accepts their offers. It is better to do a few things well, leaving a margin for the

duty of self-possession, than to be so good-natured as to accept too much and afterwards to be written down as disappointing.

Yet we must not lessen trust. What men take up, after prayer and consideration, we believe that God will help them to carry through. Even human nature, without faith, takes some pride in finishing what has been seriously begun, and it is a poor faith which cannot do more than this, claiming the promise that strength is made perfect in weakness. We must watch for signs which tell of a waning faith. Quick discouragement is a sign of frothiness. Irritation at failure is a sign of vanity, still more so is an inclination to put the blame on some other saddle than one's own. "Blame yourself if you undertake too much, but, having done so, try and get your tasks into shape and trust the power of the Holy Spirit," is a lesson which we must learn ourselves, and then we can teach it to our Readers.

And let us not forget that we must be gentle. There is no particular credit in being rough. It is not really a token of honesty to be rude. It is hard to see why some men pride themselves upon hurting the feelings of their neighbours, even of their fellow-workers, with the idea that

there is something robust in their attitude. Once it was fashionable to make practical jokes, by which, while the many laughed, some poor individual was grievously hurt in mind or body, the best public opinion to-day votes it vulgar; but there is a pride in epigram, and a bluffness which, dressed up as straightness and sincerity, runs very close to the selfish spirit that prompted the practical jokes. Who can fail to have noticed the mixture of strength, purpose, and gentleness which has been the possession of some of the holiest and ablest men? Now few qualities are more important to the Reader, who must deal with all sorts and conditions of men, than this mixture of purpose and gentleness. In dealing with him, then, we must so bear ourselves, as to encourage all these things in him. His people will soon understand that no weakness underlies his quiet Christian courtesy. He will always be capable of righteous indignation and straight reproof when occasion calls. But, in towns especially, this characteristic of the true gentleman is needed to shame down the bounce and bluster which never dares to own itself wrong; which is ever alert to save what it considers to be its reputation; and imagines that self-assertion is



self-protection. Alas! perhaps it seems so, when the bustle of life has driven to the wall the man who does to others as he would be done by. But the follower of Christ must stand by the gentle, and be gentle.

And how much of true gentleness of action is but the outcome of gentleness of thought. It was the discussions of the drawing-room of the Duchess Elizabetta Gonzaga of Urbino which led to the writing of the *Cortegiano*. There it was that Castiglione taught that the secret of true courtliness and of all gentle manners lay in the study of the just rights and feelings of one's fellow-men. There conversely he saw that the real fault of rudeness was its selfishness and pride, which lacked either the quickness or the charity to see where it was adding to the misery of human life. Our working people among whom our Readers toil are a long way off in time and condition from the days of the Urbino dukes; but the heart of man changes not, and true courtliness is as needed to-day as it was then, for winning souls and for sweetening life.

Such thoughts will help the Reader in his attitude to other workers; to refrain from criticising his fellow-servant; and to avoid that



kind of "professionalism" which allows a man to exalt his hobby by detracting from a similar one close at hand. It is a golden rule for us all, to be chary of dissecting the methods of other workers. If need be, if the cause of God require it, speak, reprove, rebuke, but only after asking God whether it is your cause which makes you indignant or His, and whether you are the one to administer the reproof.

Both gentleness and censoriousness in the circle of workers come back to roost in the breast which put them forth. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." Perhaps the best corrective to any tendency to criticism or jealousy is to resolve to train oneself to express gladness when others succeed; and the habit of expressing gladness will sometimes cause what at first was only an expression to be the thing itself. At all events God will bless the effort of those who remember that we are all one Body, and that it is only because we are so that we enter the ranks of workers at all.

I suppose that temptations to egotism belong specially to the strenuous, and that a man needs constantly to be saying "Our Father," rather than "my Father," when he braces his muscles

and calls up his alertness, so as to join worthily in the active prayer "Thy Kingdom come."

And now let us think of the Reader's influence. Influence! that wondrous power by which one man is allowed by God to bend and change the course of another's eternal life. Some speak lightly about the gaining of influence. They quote this experiment and that success, as if the terrible responsibility of it were of little account; as if to become a man who influences his fellows was a thing to be achieved as a personal glory by almost any means. Surely the task of setting oneself to influence, is one which calls for "The Spirit of Holy Fear."

Still, to exert influence must be one of the ambitions of the Reader's life, an ambition often thought of, seriously planned. In the world, to be great beyond the span of one's own life is rare. Few are those who leave behind some splendid monument of art, statecraft, or discovery, to which for ever their names are attached. Yet who shall say that the result of the ordinary man's life may not be more far-reaching than these proud achievements if he has influenced the characters of any section of his brother men? He passes away, indeed,

and his name is only remembered by a few. But the influence goes on in changing shapes and developments. It is like the reproductive expenditure of capital, which does not end with the first return, but starts fresh opportunities of reproducing wealth, that again produce more wealth. So the influence for good which a man may exercise over characters multiplies into wider influence as it is passed on from man to man. The man goes out with faith and prayer to show some brother a nobler side of life. It seems but a little thing. Even if he succeeds it is but one soul: and there are millions yet to be saved. But he has started a force which is felt in increasingly wide circles.

There is no effort which so perpetuates the influence of a man as that which is used upon character; and it may perhaps be said truly that few men achieve any lasting success who do not observe the importance of laying themselves out to better the inward springs and motives of those with whom they have to do. One man may so charm his acquaintances by his personal qualities, that he can easily persuade them to the courses he designs for them. Another may coax; another will be feared. And all these may appear in life

with a train of followers. Yet let the personality fade and the followers will disperse. But the man whose influence lasts even through death, and in spite of unpopularity and misrepresentation, is he who has so evoked recognition from the diviner side of men, that he has bettered character. Surely, then, some of the failure and inefficiency of Lay work lies at our door, if we have not taught these great truths to those whose work we rightly claim to lead.

But here we end these thoughts on the personal religion of the Reader. Whether we set ourselves to influence character, or, without being conscious of such direct aim, desire to help on the battle of the Kingdom of God by the exercise of such powers as we have, let us so rule ourselves and those who work with us, that we shall be more and more worthy of the Spirit-bearing Body, not only in what we do, but in what we are, for our personality touches very close on God.

“It is,” says Mr. Illingworth, in speaking of personality, “the one thing we know best in the world; it is also the most mysterious thing we know; ‘Grande profundum est homo.’”

There are abysmal deeps of personality which



startle us at times by the vastness of the vistas they half disclose. We are dimly aware of undeveloped capabilities within us—capabilities of energy, intelligence, and love—which we cannot conceive ultimately frustrated or functionless: germs without a future, seeds without fruit; which therefore irresistibly point to immortality as the sole condition in which a personal being can find scope. In point of fact, says Lotze, perfect personality is in God.”

The priest of God therefore will train his own character that he may the more successfully lead others to see God. And, of all others, his fellow-workers come first. These he will strive to train, till they have ever before them the splendid ambition of a human personality growing more and more fitted for immortality. In so striving for the personal religion of others he will learn the great secret of personal religion for himself, “*Esse magis quam videri*” (“To be, rather than to seem to be”).

## CHAPTER X

### FINAL WORDS

HERE must end the attempt to sketch a method by which the layman's right to take part in the active operations of his Church may shape itself in the work of a Reader in the Church of God.

It is far from complete; every chapter, as it is reconsidered, suggests further plans, regulations, and helps; but there is a limit not only to an inquirer's patience, but also to the size of this book. The most that can be claimed for it is that some care has been taken and some experience brought to bear, and that the intention has been to be simply practical.

As a last word this shall be said. The Church of England should be still, as she has been in the past, the great maker of English character. Forward she must go whate'er betide, not as a fading power for good, nervously peering here and there to see by what expedients her priesthood can be recruited and her work accomplished.

While staunch to the faith, she must repolish old methods when age has made them rusty, and put her hand to new ones; recurring as she has done before to those primitive plans and principles which enabled the Church in bygone days to convert an empire as strong as Great Britain's, and more openly pagan. Among those methods will be the wide opening of the gate to her baptized laymen, not only by extending to them a share in counsel and government, but by bringing them to see the responsibility which privilege involves of active and orderly work in their Church's fighting ranks.

The Laity of our country places and of our great centres of population and their suburbs, which call no less for evangelisation than the courts and alleys, must be led to give their help as a duty which they owe to the sacred Body into which they were baptized. Then the clergy will be able to do their proper work, less hindered by the claims of those things which are in truth Lay work, but which the clergy have struggled to compass rather than see them remain undone.

## APPENDIX I

### I

#### FORM OF "READER'S" LICENCE SANCTIONED AT A MEETING OF THE BISHOPS AT LAMBETH PALACE, ON ASCENSION DAY, 1866

A. B. by Divine permission, &c., to our well-beloved and approved in Christ, C.D., greeting. We do by these presents grant to you our licence to exercise the office of Reader in the parish of F., within our diocese and jurisdiction, on the nomination of G. H., rector of the said parish; and we do authorise you to read the Holy Scriptures, &c. &c.

And we do hereby notify and declare that this our licence shall remain valid, and shall have full force and authority, until either it shall be revoked by us or our successors, or a fresh institution to the benefice shall have been made and completed. Provided always that it shall be competent for an application to be made to us and our successors for a renewal and continuance of this our present licence.

And so we commend you to Almighty God, humbly praying in the name of our Lord Jesus



Christ that His blessing may rest on you and your work.

Given under our hand this                      day of  
in the Year of our LORD One Thousand Eight  
Hundred and                      , and in the                      Year of  
our Consecration.

NOTE.—*This Licence is to be returned to the Bishop when the holder of it ceases to work regularly in the parish for which it is granted.*

## II

### DIOCESE OF YORK

#### RULES FOR LAY READERS

[These rules are not intended for Scripture Readers, who hold a paid office and devote their whole time to their duties, but for those laymen who, along with their ordinary secular occupations, are willing to give their services in definite Church work.]

#### *Instructions to Candidates for the Office of Lay Reader.*

Lay Readers in the Diocese of York are of two classes.

1. Those who are authorised to assist in parochial work, such as visiting from house to house and reading to the sick and infirm, or holding cottage lectures under the direction of the clergyman. These receive

from the archbishop a commission appointing them to this office.

2. Those who receive in addition to this commission a licence to conduct religious services in mission and school rooms.

1. *Lay Reader's Commission.*

All candidates for the commission of a Lay Reader must have been engaged in some parochial work under the incumbent for at least six months. The incumbent must then apply for a commission in the following form, which must be copied out, signed, and forwarded to the archbishop.

*To the Right Hon. and Most Reverend William Dalrymple,  
Lord Archbishop of York.*

These are to certify to your Grace that I,  
incumbent of \_\_\_\_\_, in the diocese of York,  
believing from personal knowledge that  
of \_\_\_\_\_ is of godly life and conversation, and is  
sufficiently instructed to help, so far as he may, in  
the work of the Church in this parish, do hereby  
nominate him to perform the office of Lay Reader  
in my parish of \_\_\_\_\_ aforesaid, and do humbly pray  
that your Grace will be pleased to grant to him your  
commission to perform the duties of the said office.

Witness my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred  
and ninety.

On receipt of this certificate there will be forwarded to the incumbent a Paper of Questions to be

answered by the candidate, together with a Form of Declaration to be signed by him.

On the return of these documents, duly filled up and signed, the archbishop will, subject to any further inquiries which he may deem it necessary to make, issue his commission to the candidate to act as Lay Reader.

*2. Lay Reader's Licence.*

When any incumbent desires for one of his Lay Readers a licence to conduct public religious services in a mission chapel, or school-room, or other place, the archbishop will make special inquiries as to the qualifications of such Lay Reader for this responsible office, as regards both the sufficiency of his knowledge and the soundness of his faith.

Except in very special cases, no licence will be granted to a Lay Reader unless he has worked in the parish under the archbishop's commission for at least six months.

All applications must be made in the following form, which is to be copied out, signed, and returned to the archbishop.

*To the Right Hon. and Most Reverend William Dalrymple,  
Lord Archbishop of York.*

These are to certify to your Grace that I,  
incumbent of \_\_\_\_\_, in your Grace's  
diocese of York, believing from personal knowledge  
that \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, who holds your Grace's  
commission as Lay Reader in this parish, is not only  
sound in his religious faith but also sufficiently

instructed in the Holy Scriptures and in the Book of Common Prayer, do humbly pray that your Grace will be pleased to grant to him your licence to conduct religious services in mission rooms and other unconsecrated buildings in the said parish.

Witness my hand this                      day of                      in  
the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred  
and ninety.

A Paper of Questions, bearing on the fundamental truths of the faith and on the doctrines of the Church, will then be sent to the incumbent; such questions to be answered in writing by the candidate, without any help except such as books may supply.

If the answers to the questions be sufficient, the archbishop, subject to any further inquiries he may deem it necessary to make, will issue the licence to conduct religious services.

The archbishop will, in all cases, require a personal interview with the candidate for such a licence.

Applications and other communications are to be addressed to the archbishop's chaplain, Bishopthorpe, York.

### III

#### DIOCESE OF LONDON

##### REGULATIONS AS TO READERS

Readers in the diocese of London consist of two classes : (1) Diocesan Readers ; (2) Parochial Readers.



*Diocesan Readers*

The Regulations as to Diocesan Readers are the following :—

1. The Commission is to be held permanently, unless revoked by the bishop, and is to entitle the holder to conduct, in any parish to which he may be licensed, services in school and other rooms and in the open air, and also such extra services in consecrated buildings as the incumbent may wish and as the bishop may approve ; and, further, to perform occasionally similar duties in any other parish in the diocese at the request of the incumbent.

2. The person desiring to be appointed a Diocesan Reader is to write to the Secretary of the Readers' Board for a form of application, and is to return it filled up.

3. The Board, if it sees fit, will nominate the applicant to the bishop, and the bishop will, at his discretion, grant the commission after or without an examination in the Bible and Book of Common Prayer, and the bishop will name a time and place for admitting the Reader to the office by the form of service in use in the diocese.

4. The Reader will at admission, and may, when ministering, be habited in surplice, and will be entitled to the use of such badge and tippet as may be authorised.

N.B.—*The commission will only be granted when extra services are to be conducted or addresses in consecrated buildings are to be given regularly.*

*Parochial Readers*

The Regulations for the nomination and licensing of Parochial Readers are the following :—

1. The license is to entitle the holder to conduct services in school and other rooms and in the open air in the parish to which he is licensed.

2. The incumbent proposing to nominate a Parochial Reader is to apply for a form of nomination to the Secretary of the Readers' Board, and to return it filled up.

3. He will therein supply the names of two communicants who are ready to testify to the character and fitness of the proposed Reader.

4. The bishop, when satisfied of the competency of the person nominated, will issue his licence, which shall be sent to the incumbent upon whose application it is granted, and shall be handed by him to the Reader at such parochial service or meeting as he may deem expedient, during which the Reader will read and sign the prescribed declaration.

5. The licence is revocable by the bishop, and becomes void upon the death or removal of the incumbent or minister in charge of the parish, or upon the holder ceasing to work in the parish according to the terms of the licence, and when revoked or void must be returned to the Secretary of the Board.

6. A licence avoided by the death or removal of the incumbent or minister in charge of the parish can be revived by an endorsement made by the

Readers' Board upon the application in writing of the succeeding incumbent or minister within three months of his succeeding to the parish.

*N.B.—No licence is required for reading the lessons in church.*

#### READERS' BOARD

*Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Board.*<sup>1</sup>

“Diocesan Readers being authorised to take ‘such extra services in consecrated buildings as the incumbent may wish and the bishop may approve,’ the bishop approves of the use by them at such extra services on Sundays and week days of any portions of the Bible and any parts of the Prayer Book except those parts which can only be properly used in church by a priest, provided always that such extra services shall not be given in place of the regular services for matins and evensong; the bishop further approves of Diocesan Readers giving addresses and expositions of Holy Scripture, and catechising at the extra services.”

#### DECLARATION BY A PAROCHIAL READER, TO BE SIGNED BY HIM BEFORE RECEIVING HIS LICENCE.

I,  
being desirous of obtaining a licence for the office of Parochial Reader in the parish of  
in the diocese of London, do hereby declare that

<sup>1</sup> Held at St. Paul's Chapter House, on Thursday, 16th April 1891.

I have been baptized and confirmed, and am a regular communicant of the Church of England, and that I accept the doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the Book of Common Prayer, and the ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, and the Thirty-nine Articles; and that I will be obedient to the incumbent of the parish and the constituted authorities of the Church, subject to the control of the bishop of the diocese.

Declared by me this                      day } (Signed)  
of                      , 189 . }

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that the  
above-named \_\_\_\_\_ did read and sign  
this declaration in our presence this  
day of \_\_\_\_\_, 189 .

THE FORM OF ADMITTING DIOCESAN READERS, TO  
THEIR OFFICE, ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE  
DIOCESE OF LONDON.

*When the day named by the Bishop is come, the Chairman of the Readers' Board, or his Deputy, shall present unto the Bishop (sitting in his chair) the persons to be admitted Readers, saying these words :*

Right reverend father in God, I present unto you these persons to be admitted to the office of Reader in the Church.

*The Bishop.*

Hath inquiry been made into their life and conversation and their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures?



*The Chairman (or his Deputy).*

Inquiry hath been made, and they have been adjudged to be meet for the duties that will be required of them.

*Then shall the Bishop exhort all those who are to be admitted, standing before him, after the manner following :*

Dearly beloved, it hath ever been the practice of the Church to employ not only the ordained ministers but also devout Laymen in various labours for the spiritual good of men and for the edification of the whole Body of Christ. And the Church hath profited greatly by their service, making increase of the Body according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. Wherefore this office of Reader, for which ye now offer yourselves, is to be held in great esteem as fulfilling the Lord's purpose and serving greatly to the honour of the Church, the good of your fellow Christians, and the glory of God. And we earnestly exhort you to see that ye live worthy of your high vocation, believing earnestly what ye are set to teach, adding good example to spiritual precepts, and ever remembering what that Church is of which ye are now to be officers, and who is the Head thereof. And now, before we admit you, let us fall to prayer that God's blessing may be with you always.

*Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall stand up and say :*

O Lord God Almighty, who dost vouchsafe Thy heavenly blessing to all that love Thy Word, look down, we beseech Thee, on these Thy servants, now to receive authority from us to labour in that Holy Word within this diocese, as they shall be directed by Thy ordained ministers. Pour down upon them the abundance of Thy grace ; make them modest in their ministration, ready to obey those set over them in the Lord, diligent to prove and fashion their own lives and the lives of their families according to Thy blessed Word. Grant unto them to grow in the knowledge and love of Thy Word, that they may minister therein to the salvation of souls, to the glory of Thy Name, and to the edification of Thy Holy Church ; so that finally they may have their portion with those who from the beginning have in this office faithfully ministered Thy Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Bishop deliver into the hands of every one of them, humbly kneeling before him, the New Testament, saying :*

Take thou authority to read the Word of God, and to minister in the office as shall be appointed unto thee by the bishop, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Bishop say :*

The Lord be with you.

*Ans.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Our Father, &c.

COLLECTS.

*Then the Bishop shall bless them, saying this :*

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

IV

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

RULES

The following particulars with regard to licensed Lay Readers may be of use both to incumbents and to any Lay workers who may desire to become licensed.

*Nomination.*—All applications for licence should be made in the first instance to the Bishop of Southwark, accompanied by a nomination from the vicar of the parish in which the applicant proposes to work. It would save time also if this nomination were accompanied by a letter stating the kind of work which the applicant is going to do, and any particulars with regard to degrees, certificates, or other qualifications which he may possess.

*Examination.*—Previous to the issuing of the licence, an examination will take place so as to make sure that some real knowledge of the Christian faith, as accepted and taught by the Church of England, is possessed by all who hold the licence. The main subjects in which knowledge will be expected are, the Bible, Prayer Book, Church History, and for those who are going to work among men, Christian apologetics. No fixed form of examination, and no set books will be put forth, but each applicant will be examined with due regard to the work which he has undertaken.

*Admission.*—After the examination is passed the candidate will be admitted by, and receive his licence from, either the bishop of the diocese, or the bishop suffragan, at a service.

*Badge.*—A silver badge, specially designed for this diocese, can be obtained by all who hold the diocesan licence, and it is suggested that in some cases this may be purchased by the parish which the Reader serves, and transferred, if a change occurs, to the Reader's successor.

*Renewal of Licences.*—Following the method used in the case of those clergy who have "leave to officiate" in the diocese, a Lay Reader's licence must be renewed each year. This renewal will not be a mere formality. The incumbent of the parish must express his desire that the licence should be renewed, and the holder of it must make it clear that he is continuing to do the work for which the licence was originally issued.



*Reading.*—It is on all hands allowed to be necessary that the Church worker should study to increase his knowledge of the faith, and to improve his methods of work. It is hoped that the Lay Reader who holds the diocesan licence will therefore feel it his duty to respond to such invitations as may be made to that end from time to time. A book, or books, varied to suit the various needs of our Lay Readers, will be recommended every six months, and will form the basis of a discussion at the conference.

*Conference.*—Those who desire the support and authority of a diocesan licence will be ready to recognise their unity by united gatherings. There will, therefore, be two conferences each year—one in the summer, one in the winter—attendance at which will be one of the conditions of licence, except for reasons approved by the bishop. These conferences may be in part devotional, in part a discussion on some subject or book, which all licensed Lay Readers will have been asked to read in advance, and in part on some practical topic of interest to the work of the Readers. One or other of the bishops will endeavour to preside at the conferences.

*Preaching.*—The ordinary licence will permit the holder to give addresses to children in consecrated buildings, but not to preach to adults in church; if it is desired that the Lay Reader should have a special endorsement on his licence to enable him to preach to adults in church, it should be mentioned by the incumbent in the letter of nomination, or at the time of the annual renewal of licence, so

that his fitness may be tested. But the Lay Readers will not in any case be licensed to preach at the celebration of holy communion, or at matins or evensong on Sunday in consecrated buildings, only at special or after-services.

All licensed Readers are permitted to read the litany, omitting the priest's part, in the services in consecrated buildings.

FORM OF ADMITTING LAY READERS TO THEIR  
OFFICE.

Hymn or Psalm.

*The hymn or psalm being ended, the Chaplain shall present unto the Bishop all those who are to be admitted to the office of Lay Reader, or licensed to work in the diocese, saying :*

Right reverend Father in God, I present unto you *this man* to be appointed to the office of Lay Reader (or this Lay Reader to be licensed for work in this diocese).

*The Bishop.*

Hath the *person* whom ye present unto us been found meet, both for *his* knowledge and life, to exercise this office ?

*The Chaplain.*

He has been found so to be.

*Then shall the Chaplain of the Order (and the incumbent of the Lay Reader's parish), present to the Bishop those who are to be admitted to the office ; to each of whom, kneeling before him, he shall say :*

. . . I admit thee to the office of Lay Reader in the Church of God. [*Then shall he deliver to him a Bible : after which he shall also give to him his licence, thus saying :*] Take thou authority to exercise thy office in the diocese of Rochester, so long as thou shalt be licensed thereto by the bishop. The Lord bless thee and keep thee, &c.

*Then shall be brought unto the Bishop those who, being Lay Readers already, desire to be licensed for work in this diocese, to whom, kneeling before him, he shall say :*

. . . Lay Reader in the Church of God, take thou authority to exercise thy office in the diocese of Rochester, &c. &c.

*Then shall the Bishop commend to the prayers of those present all who have just been admitted (and licensed), and silence shall be kept for a space.*

*Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall stand up and say :*

Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service, look down, we beseech Thee, on this Thy servant, who has now received

authority from us for his work in Thy Church. Pour down upon him the abundance of Thy grace : make him modest and humble in his ministration, ready to obey those set over him in the Lord, diligent to prove and fashion his own life and the lives of his family according to Thy blessed Word. Grant unto him to grow in the knowledge and love of Thy Word, that he may minister to the salvation of souls, to the edification of Thy Church and to the glory of Thy Holy Name ; so that finally he may have his portion with those who have faithfully ministered Thy Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn. Address.

*Then shall the Bishop say :*

The Lord be with you.

*Ans.* And with thy spirit.

*Let us pray.*

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

O Lord God Almighty, sanctify, we beseech Thee, these Thy servants, and grant unto them with wis-



dom and understanding to read Thy Holy Word, and to exercise themselves therein. Keep them by Thy grace in all holy conversation, for the love of Thy only begotten Son, with whom and the Holy Ghost, the Giver of life, Thou livest and reignest, one God now and ever. Amen.

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Almighty God, who has built Thy Church upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Head Corner Stone; grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Then the Bishop shall bless them, saying this :*

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

## APPENDIX II

### I

#### THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

*Canon for the Government of Lay Readers. (From  
the Digest)*

##### TITLE I. CANON XII

##### *Of Lay Readers*

§ 1. A Lay Communicant of this Church may receive from the bishop a written licence to conduct the service of the church in a congregation convened for public worship, as a Lay Reader ; but such licence shall not be granted for conducting the service in a congregation without a minister, which is able, and has had reasonable opportunity, to secure the services of an ordained minister. Such licence may be given by the bishop, of his own motion, for service in any vacant parish, congregation, or mission ; but where a rector is in charge, his request and recommendation must have been previously signified to the bishop. Such licence must be given for a definite period not longer than one year from its date ; but it may be renewed from time to time

by the bishop's endorsement to that effect. The licence of any Lay Reader may be revoked at the discretion of the ecclesiastical authority.

§ 2. A Lay Reader so licensed shall not act as such in any diocese other than his own, unless he shall have received another licence from the bishop of the diocese in which he desires to serve. If he be a student in any theological seminary, he shall also obtain the permission of the presiding officer of such institution.

§ 3. Every Lay Reader shall be subject to such regulations as may be prescribed by the ecclesiastical authority. In all matters relating to the conduct of the service, and to the sermons and homilies to be read, he shall conform to the directions of the minister in charge of the parish, congregation, or mission in which he is serving, or where there is no minister in charge, to the directions of the bishop. He shall not use the absolution, nor the benediction, nor the offices of the church, except those for the burial of the dead, and for visitation of the sick and of prisoners, omitting in these last the absolutions and benedictions. He shall not deliver sermons of his own composition; but he may deliver addresses, instructions, and exhortations as a catechist in vacant parishes, congregations, or missions, if he be specially licensed thereto by the bishop. He shall not assume the dress appropriate to clergymen ministering in the congregation.

## II

## PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

## CANON XV

The offices of Catechist, Subdeacon, and Reader are recognised as offices in this Church to which admission should be given by the bishop in presence of the congregation. Admission to such offices shall be given once only to any person, but the active exercise of the office shall continue during such time only, as the Catechist, Subdeacon, or Reader holds the bishop's licence, and the bishop may grant, withhold, revoke, or renew his licence as he may deem fit.

The office of Reader is to read in the congregation the Holy Scriptures as they are appointed in the daily offices of the Church and such homilies as are allowed by authority, and to say openly such offices of prayer as the Church may allow to be used in the congregation by persons not in holy orders, but in all subordination to and by the direction of the priest.

Readers have authority to baptize in cases of extreme necessity.

Every candidate for admission shall satisfy the bishop as to his godly, sober, and honest conversation. He shall be examined as to his qualifications and fitness, and shall bind himself to submit to all regulations in matters canonical in the exercise of his office which the bishop may prescribe.



The bishop may, as he shall see fit, license any Reader to preach.

The office may be held by persons ordinarily engaged in secular avocations.

### III

#### DIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

##### RULES FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND GUIDANCE OF LAY READERS

1. The duty of a Lay Reader is to conduct or assist in conducting, under licence from the bishop, and so far as is competent for a layman, the services of the Church when invited to do so by the incumbent, minister or curate-in-charge.

It is not competent for a Lay Reader to say the form of Absolution or the Benediction, or use the office of Holy Communion or any part of it. In the absence of the minister he shall receive the offerings at the chancel step, and there conclude the service with "The grace of our Lord, &c."

2. The Name of any Person nominated for the office of Lay Reader shall be submitted to the bishop by memorial signed by the minister, one, at least, of the wardens, and not less than four adult communicants of the congregation requiring his services; if the place be extra-parochial the memorial shall be signed by the Archdeacon of the district.

3. Before issuing a licence the bishop will require from the person nominated for this office a declara-

tion according to the approved form that he is in communion with the Church of England, and will conform to the Liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer, and knowingly teach nothing contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England; that he will conduct himself agreeably to the order and discipline of the said Church, and comply with the regulations and instructions issued from time to time by the bishop while holding and officiating in the said office.

4. The licence shall be read publicly in the congregation by the minister of the parish or district, or by his representative, or by the Lay Reader as soon as convenient after it is granted, and shall not be acted upon until so read.

5. A licence issued to a Lay Reader for any parish or parochial district shall, on the induction of a new incumbent, cease to be in force, but shall be renewable on application to the bishop by the said incumbent minister; it shall be returned for counter-signature by the bishop without prejudice to the exercise of his functions by the Lay Reader in the meantime.

6. Every licence is revokable by the bishop at pleasure.

7. A Lay Reader may exercise his office in any parish or district on application from the minister thereof, provided that he shall have first obtained the consent of the minister to whom he is licensed.

8. The minister of any parish is at liberty to decline the services of any of his licensed Lay

Readers. In such case he shall forward to the bishop a statement of his reason for such action.

9. The Lay Reader shall read in the congregation only such printed sermons as have the approval of the minister of the parish or of the bishop—no oral expositions or written discourses shall be used by the Lay Reader unless by special permission of the bishop on the recommendation of the said minister.

10. A cassock and surplice should be worn by the Lay Reader when officiating.

11. Every Lay Reader is entitled to receive from the wardens of the parish or district, after each service at which he officiates, a sum of money sufficient to cover his travelling expenses.

NOTE.—*Lay Readers can obtain volumes of sermons at the Church office from the Lay Readers' Library (subscription, 2s. 6d. per annum), or from the Theological Library (subscription, 10s. 6d. per annum).*

N.B.—*The licence of any Lay Reader ceasing to act, or leaving his district, should be immediately returned by the clergyman to the Registrar.*

#### THE ORDER FOR THE ADMISSION OF LAY READERS OR CATECHISTS

1. After the 3rd Collect (a hymn or anthem having been sung), those who are to be presented as Readers will assemble at the chancel steps, and there be presented to the bishop or his commissary by the rector of the parish.

2. The Bishop will then ask them each as follows :

Q. Dost thou desire to serve God in the office of a Lay Reader?

A. I do.

Q. Wilt thou in all thy service observe the order and discipline of the Church of England?

A. I will.

Q. Wilt thou endeavour to frame thy life and conversation so as to be an example to the people among whom thou livest?

A. By God's help I will.

Then the Bishop, handing to each his licence, shall say :

Receive this licence to act as Lay Reader in the district to which thou art appointed. That which thou sayest with thy lips, believe in thine heart, and that which thou believest in thine heart, practise in thy life, and may the Lord bless thee in thy work for His glory and the good of His people. Amen.

Then shall they all kneel at the chancel steps, or at some other meet place, and the Bishop shall say :

*Let us pray.*

O Almighty God, Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, we beseech Thee to enlighten and strengthen these Thy servants for the work and service which they have now



undertaken, that they may ever set forth the glory of Thy Holy Name, and promote the edification of Thy Church, and lay up for themselves a good reward in the day when Thou shalt render to every man according to his work, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall follow the hymn and a sermon.

## APPENDIX III

### CONVOCAATION OF CANTERBURY

#### BROTHERHOODS AND LAY EVANGELISTS

A Joint Committee of the two Houses on "Brotherhoods" reported in 1891, and the following Resolutions were agreed to by both Houses on 4th February :—

1. That in the opinion of this House the time has come when the Church may with advantage avail herself of the voluntary self-devotion of Brotherhoods, both ordained and lay, the members of which are willing to labour in the service of the Church without appealing for funds or to any form of public support.

2. That a wide elasticity is desirable as to the rules and system of such Brotherhoods as may be formed in the several dioceses.

3. That such Brotherhoods should work in strict subordination to the authority of the bishop of each diocese in which they are established or employed, and only on the invitation and under the sanction of the incumbent or curate in charge of the parish.

4. That those who enter a Brotherhood should be permitted after an adequate term of probation, and being not less than twenty-five years of age, to undertake lifelong engagements to the life and

work of the community, provided that such engagements be subject, on cause shown, to release by the bishop of the diocese in which the Brotherhood is established.

5. That the statutes of the community should be sanctioned by the bishop under his hand, and not be changed without his approval in like manner.

Your Committee, bearing in mind the recommendations which have already found expression in the reports and resolutions of Convocation on the subject which they have had under consideration, are of opinion that in order to recognise a trained evangelist and authorise him to perform the duties of his office in any diocese, it would be sufficient, and probably expedient, that the bishop of the diocese should grant him a "Reader's" licence in a form similar to that recommended by the bishops in 1866. (*See Appendix.*)

Your Committee are further of opinion that for laymen desiring to give themselves wholly to evangelistic work in the Church, and to be recognised by the Church as duly qualified for such work, it is essential that they should have received at least one year's training in a Home of which the bishop of the diocese, as visitor, has approved the rules external and internal, has sanctioned the forms of service and text-books in use, and has licensed the chaplain.

That at the close of the period of training he should have satisfied one or more examiners ap-

pointed by the aforesaid bishop of his proficiency in the knowledge of Church doctrine and practice, and of his moral, intellectual, and spiritual fitness for evangelistic work.

That he should have received a testimonial of godly behaviour during the period of his training from the head of the training institution.

That he should have been admitted to his office by the aforesaid bishop, and should have received letters of admission from him.

An incumbent desirous of employing an evangelist in his parish would then notify the same to his bishop, giving the name and address of the evangelist. The evangelist would then be instructed to forward to the bishop his letters of admission, signed by the bishop of the diocese in which the training home is situated, and to furnish such testimonials as might be required. The bishop, if satisfied by these of the fitness of the man, would grant him his licence as a "Reader" in his diocese, authorising him to perform such duties in the parish in which he is to be employed as would be stated in the form of licence.

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